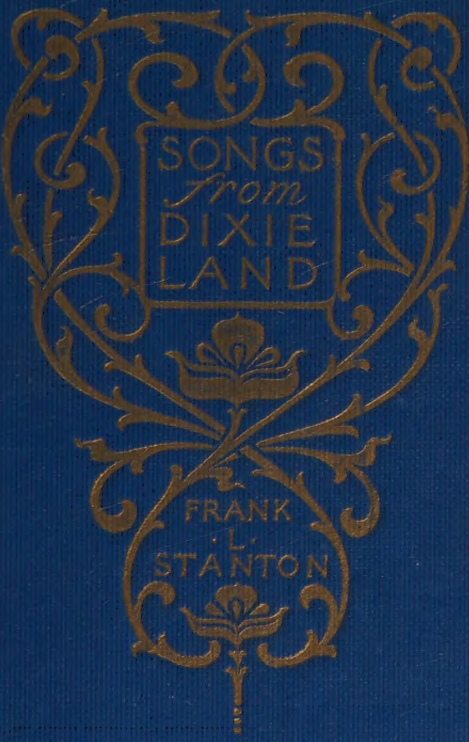
SONGS
from
DIXIE
LAND
FRANK
L.
STANTON

To Margaret H. Allen Trillon
1926

To the Sweetest Pal
in the world
Margie

SONGS FROM DIXIE LAND

SONGS FROM DIXIE LAND

BY

FRANK L. STANTON

INDIANAPOLIS

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PUBLISHERS

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TO

CLARK HOWELL

OF GEORGIA

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PLANTATION SONGS

THE BACKSLIDING BROTHER

DE screech owl screech f'um de ol' barn lof';
"You drinked yo' dram sence you done
swear off;
En you gwine de way
Whar' de sinners stay,
En Satan gwine ter roas' you at de Jedgmint
Day!"

Den de ol' ha'nt say, f'um de ol' chu'ch wall:
"You des so triflin' dat you *had* ter fall!
En you gwine de way
Whar' de brimstone stay,
En Satan gwine ter roas' you at de Jedgmint
Day!"

Den I shake en shiver,
En I hunt fer kiver,
En I cry ter de good Lawd, "Please deliver!"

I tell 'im plain
Dat my hopes is vain,
En I drinked my dram fer ter ease my pain!

Den de screech owl screech f'um de north ter south:
"You drinked yo' dram, en you *smacked* yo' *mouth!*
En you gwine de way
Whar' de brimstone stay,
En Satan gwine ter roas' you at de Jedgmint Day!"

A CHRISTMAS CONVERSION

'TWUZ gittin' long 'fo' Chris'mus, w'en de holly hangin' red
En you feels it in yo' j'ints dat de fros' is on de shed;
W'en de angels is onravelin' er de snowflakes in de night
En de worl' wrop up 'twell mawnin' in a freezin' sheet er white.

Des li'l' while 'fo' Chris'mus, w'en de squerril projick roun'
En de rabbit say, "Look out dar!" ez de ripe nuts hit de groun';
W'en dey has de candy-pullin', en de apple cider's sweet,
En de music in de fiddle mek' de fidget in yo' feet;

Dat de passon gone ter preachin' ez he never
preach befo',
Dat dancin' wuz onlawful, en we musn't dance no
mo'!
De scripter wuz ergin it, en de chu'ch had lay it
down
You couldn't git ter glory whilst you swingin'
gals eroun'.

Now, we done had 'lowed, betwix' us, dar wuz
dancin' gwine ter be,
Ef we had ter miss de preachin' en de missionary
tree;
En so, w'en come de Chris'mus en de snow wuz
on de groun'
De passon come en kotched us des a-swingin'
gals eroun'!

He kotched de deacons at it; de stewards wuz in
line;
De cabin' flo' wuz creakin' en de fiddles des
a-gwine!

'Twuz wuss dan halleluia en glory in yo' soul—
'Twuz "Swing dem corners, people!" en "Let de music roll!"

Dar never wuz sich music ez dey mek' dem fiddles play:
De passon hollered: "Stop it!" but de fiddlers sawed away!
De sisters bouncin' in de dance—de deacons fer 'em reachin',
Dey hollered at de passon dar, "Dis sho' does beat yo' preachin'!"

Den it come ter pass de passon fergit his Chris'mus tex':
He jerk his coat en holler: "Please God, I comin' nex'!"
En he jump ez quick ez lightnin' in de middle er his fol',
En de way he swing dem sisters wuz a caution ter behol'!

You never see sich cuttin' up all up en down de hall:
De passon led de deacons roun', outdancin' er 'em all!
En he say, w'en it wuz over, whilst a-carryin' off de prize:
"Gwine home ter read my titles cl'ar ter mansions in de skies!"

WITH THE COLORED REGIMENT BAND

I

HE wuz down heah hoein' de cotton in de lan'
whar' he raise en bo'n,
En all he knowed wuz de ol' home road, 'twell de
war-talk hit come on;
Den he stop de mule in de furrer, en take his gun
in his han';
He des can't stay! so he march away wid de Cul-
lud Regiment Ban'!

"Look at 'im!" (Dat what his mammy say.)
"Hep ter de right, en hep!
He black ez coal,—Lawd bless yo' soul!—
But he step lak' a white man step!"

II

We lock up de house en de chillun; we lef' de
crap in de grass;
We stir roun' some, we'n we heah de drum, fer
ter see 'im marchin' pas'!
He dress in blue lak' a sojer true, en de cap'n say,
—good lan'!—
"He de bes' one yit—ef his cloze *don't* fit—dat
march ter de Regiment Ban'!"

"Look at 'im!" (Dat what his mammy say.)
"Hep ter de right, en hep!
I glad he bo'n 'fo' de war come on,
Kaze he step lak' a white man step!"

III

Ter think dat he raise en bo'n heah, en never
been l'arnt in school—
Dat all he knowed wuz de ol' home road en de
ways er de Georgy mule;

En den ter jine de army, en shoulder his gun—
good lan'!
We wuz proud dat day w'en he march away wid
de Cullud Regiment Ban'!

"Look at 'im!" (Dat what his mammy say.)
"Hep ter de right, en hep!
He my *own* son, wid his guv'ment gun,
En he step lak' a white man step!"

IV

En we gone ter de train ter see 'im off; en we
heah de news er de fight—
How de Spaniels say, ez he blaze away, dat de
bullets wuz flyin' right!
How dey shot one arm f'um his shoulder, but he
fou't wid de yuther han'!—
De boy we raise in de freedom days, dat march
ter de Regiment Ban'.

"Look at 'im!" (Dat what his mammy say.)
"Hep ter de right, en hep!
Min' what I say: he'll step some day
Ez proud ez a white man step!"

V

En de cap'n say w'en dey sont 'im home—in de letter what he write,—
"His face wuz black ez de chimbly-back, but de heart what he had wuz white!"
En ter think dat he fight fer his country so—de boy dat we raise—good lan'!
En we bless de day w'en he march away wid de Cullud Regiment Ban'.

"Look at 'im!" (Dat what his mammy say.)
"He done wid de hèp en hep;
I shouts fer joy fer my sojer-boy,
Kaze he step lak' a white man step!"

MISTER RABBIT'S GENTILITY

MISTER Rabbit is a gentleman—he skip er-
long his way,
He takin' of it easy w'en I stackin' up de hay;
He see me in de cotton fiel' f'um summer up ter
fall,
En pass me by, en wink his eye, en never wuck
at all!

Mr. Rabbit is a gentleman—he livin' mighty fine,
He never pullin' fodder whar' de white man got
me gwine;
He hidin' in de brier patch en takin' of his ease,
He stir roun' w'en he want ter, en lay down w'en
he please.

"O Mister—Mister Rabbit, I wish you he'p me
out;
You all time on a picnic or a-projickin' erbout!
Ef you he'p me hoe de cotton I'll pay you in de
fall;"
He pass me by, en wink his eye, en never wuck
at all!

BR'ER WILLIAMS

BR'ER WILLIAMS sich a sinner
He tu'n de preacher pale;
He never b'lieve dat story
'Bout Jonah en de whale.

He tu'n aside f'um people
Dat wear Salwation robe;
He got he doubts 'bout Joshua,
En draw de line at Job.

He say dis worl' de bes' one
He ever hope ter win;
He never been ter meetin'
Sence freedom time come in.

But once he had a wision:
He got ter heaven's gate
Des 'bout de time er sundown,
En fifteen minutes late.

Den Mister Gabriel tell 'im:
"Br'er Williams, go yo' way:—
Des take de elewator
Ter whar' de devil stay!"

En, bless yo' soul! Nex' Sunday
What did de people see?
Br'er Williams—settin' in de pew
Ez solemn ez could be!

But now, de trouble comin'!
A yearthquake hit de wall—
De shingles went ter shakin',
En down de steeple fall!

De preacher, he wuz trimblin'
En scart clean out his shoes;
De pulpit went ter playin'
At leapfrog wid de pews!

Ontell at las' de preacher
Got strength enough ter say:
"De Lawd above have mercy!—
Dar's a Jonah heah terday!"

En den dey grabbed Br'er Williams,
Ontell he fit en fou't,—
Went rockin' wid 'im ter de do'
En pitch Br'er Williams out!

En 'bout de las' wuz seen er him
He gwine erlong de way
Ter hunt de elewator
Ter whar' de devil stay!

LI'L' FELLER WID HIS MAMMY'S EYES

ALL dat I got on de whole plantation,
All dat I love in de whole creation—
In de roun', green worl', or de big blue skies,
Is a fat li'l' feller wid his mammy's eyes—
Li'l' feller wid his mammy's eyes!

He play in de san', en he roll in de clover,
He watch fer me w'en de day wuck over;
He look so cunnin', en he look so wise,—
Dat fat li'l' feller wid his mammy's eyes—
Li'l' feller wid his mammy's eyes!

Fur ways off he kin see en know me,
En I h'ist 'im up on de mule befo' me;
En I rides 'im home, en his mammy 'sprise
At dat fat li'l' feller wid his mammy's eyes—
Li'l' feller wid his mammy's eyes!

He got sich ways en tricks erbout 'im,
I knows dat I can't git 'long widout 'im;
En I thanks de Lawd, in de big blue skies,
Fer dat fat li'l' feller wid his mammy's eyes—
Li'l' feller wid his mammy's eyes.

MISTER WINTER'S MESSAGE

DE Winter sen' a message:
"Miss Springtime, is you home?
I 'bleege ter wait outside yo' gate:
I wants some honeycomb!"
En den Miss Springtime up en say:
"You blowed my honey-bees away!"

De Winter sorter study
Ter fin' some winnin' word:
"I 'bout ter freeze! I wish you please
Tu'n loose a mockin'bird!"
En den Miss Springtime say: "You knows
My mockin'birds is all done froze!"

De Winter stan' dar, quollin',—
He cut up roun' de place;
He 'low he'll sen' a blizzard den,
Ter slap Miss Springtime face!
Miss Springtime say: "Ontell you go,
Dat face er mine I'll never show!"

DE LI'L' CHILLUN

DE li'l' chillun—dey so col',—
I hates ter see 'em shiver,
De night-win' freezin' ter dey soul,
En des a roof fer kiver!
Dey cry fer fire night en day;
En I—I dunno what ter say!

Dey kneel down whar' de col' win' creep,
Whilst I a-settin' nigh 'em;
"Dis night I lays me down ter sleep,"
En ax de Lawd stay by 'em;—
Des in de sweet ol' way—lak' dat.
(He dunno whar' dey livin' at!)

Dey comes a-cuddlin' ter my bre's'
Fer comfort—one en all.
I tries ter sing 'em ter dey res',
But feels de hot tears fall.
Po' li'l' lambs! nowhar's ter go,— !
I sorry—sorry fer 'em so!

En yit, I knows de good Lawd say,
  Once—w'en dey grief He see,—
What time de chillun los' dey way,
  "Go tell 'em come ter Me!"
I wish who said dem words, lak' dat,
Knowed whar' dese chillun livin' at!

SWEETES' LI'L' FELLER

SWEETES' li'l' feller—
Everybody knows;
Dunno what ter call 'im,
But he mighty lak' a rose!

Lookin' at his mammy
Wid eyes so shiny-blue,
Mek' you think dat heaven
Is comin' clost ter you!

W'en he's dar a-sleepin'
In his li'l' place,
Think I see de angels
Lookin' thoo' de lace.

SWEETES' LI'L' FELLER

W'en de dark is fallin'—
  W'en de shadders creep,
Den dey comes on tip-toe
  Ter kiss 'im in his sleep.

Sweetes' li'l' feller—
  Everybody knows;
Dunno what ter call 'im,
  But he mighty lak' a rose!

"NO GOOD TER DE COUNTRY"

DEY tells me I don't 'mount ter nuttin'. I knows dat I gray en I ol',
En somehow my j'ints is *techous*, en shake w'en de win' blowin' col'.
"In de way!" so dey say—so dey tells me: dey allus a-treatin' me bad:
"I des ain't no good ter de country!" . . But I done give it all dat I had!

Seven sons
Wid guv'mint guns,
Gone whar' de bugles blow;
En some still fightin' de battles,
En some whar' de wil' grass grow!

Dey gone ter de war 'gin de Spaniels—what time dey wuz takin'-on so;
My prop en my stay, dey went marchin' away, en 'twuz *me* dat fust tol' 'em ter go!

My ol' eyes wuz rainy dat mawnin'; but de heart
what wuz in me wuz glad:
I des ain't no good ter de country, but I done give
it all dat I had!

Seven sons
Wid guv'mint guns,
Gone whar' de bugles blow;
En some still fightin' de battles,
En some whar' de wil' grass grow!

Some day de wars'll be over, en de boys'll come
home f'um de fight;
En I reckon dey'll say w'en dey marchin' dis way:
"De ol' man done lef' us 'Good-night!'"
But I hopes—sence dey fit fer de ol' flag—dey'll
think er me den en be glad:
Who wuzn't no good ter de country, but give it
des all dat he had!

Seven sons
Wid guv'mint guns,
Gone whar' de bugles blow;
En some still fightin' de battles,
En some whar' de wil' grass grow!

THE OLD DEACON'S VERSION

OF THE STORY OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

I S'POSE yo' know de story, O my brotherin', er de man
Dat wuz rich ez cream, en livin' on de fatness er de lan'?
How he sot dar eatin' 'possum, en when Laz'rus ax fer some,
He tell 'im: "Git erway, dar! fer you'll never git a crumb!"

De rich man wuz a-feastin' f'um his chiny plate en cup,
Kaze he 'fraid his po' relations come en eat his wittles up;
I spec' he had *two* 'possums on de table long en wide,
En a jimmyjohn er cane juice wuz a-settin' by his side.

En he say: "Dis heah des suits me, en I gwine
ter eat my fill;
But I'll sic de dogs on Laz'rus, ef he waitin' roun'
heah still."
En de dogs commence dey barkin', raise a racket
high en low,
En when Laz'rus see 'em comin' he decide 'twuz
time ter go.

So, he limp off on his crutches, en de rich man
think it's fun,
But I reckon Laz'rus answer: "I'll git even wid
you, son!"
De rich man so enjoy hisse'f he laugh hisse'f ter
bed,
En, brotherin', when he wake up he wuz stiff,
stone dead!

En den he raise a racket, en he holler out: "What
dis?
De place is onfamiliar, en I wonder whar' I is?"

Den Satan, he mek answer: "I'm de man ter tell
you dat:
You's in de fire department er de place I livin'
at!"

Den de rich man say: "Whar' Laz'rus dat wuz
beggin' at my gate?"
En Satan tell him: "Yander, wid a silver spoon
en plate;
En he eatin' fit ter kill hisse'f! He spendin' er
de day
Wid good ol' Mister Abra'm, but he mighty fur
away!"

"Will you please, suh," say de rich man, "ax
him bring a drink ter me,
Wid a li'l' ice ter cool it? Kaze I hot ez hot kin
be!"
But Satan fall ter laughin', whilst he stir de fire
roun':—
"De ice would melt, my brother, 'fo' it ever hit
de groun'!"

Den he fill a cup wid brimstone—fill it steamin' ter de top;
But de rich man say he swear off, dat he never tech a drop!
But Satan grab his pitchfork whilst de rich man give a squall,
En in 'bout a half a second he had swallered cup en all!

Now, dat's erbout de story er de rich man at de feas',
What wouldn't pass de 'possum roun' when Laz'-ruz want a piece.
De 'possum means yo' pocketbook, de moral's plain ez day:
Shake de dollars in de basket 'fo' you go de rich man's way!

AN UNFORTUNATE BROTHER

I DES so weak en sinful,
Or else, so ol' en po',
Dat Mister Chris'mus done fergit
De number on my do'!

I tell 'im: "Heah I is, suh!
You been dis way befo'."
But Mister Chris'mus done fergit
De number on my do'!

I see 'im fin' de rich folks
Dat des don't want no mo'!
But—good Lawd knows, he done fergit
De number on my do'!

I wonders, en I wonders
Des why he slight me so!
I hopes de Lawd'll show 'im
De number on my do'!

ON DRESS PARADE

DE Lily dress up all in white,
De Vi'let primp in blue,
De Rose put on a gown er red
En say: "I sweet ez you!"

En den dey had a picnic—
De weather look so fine;
But de blizzard blow de sleet en snow,
En de sun fergit ter shine!

De Lily shake en shiver—
De Rose say: "How is you?"
En de Vi'let—he make answer:
"I feelin' powerful blue!"

En still de blizzard blowin',—
Des toss 'em lef' en right,
En dey went ter bed en kivered
Wid a freezin' sheet er white!

DE BUMBSHELL

DE bumbshell, he go sizzin' 'long—
Shoo, chillun—shoo!
En dis yer is he only song:
"Whar'—whar' is you?"

Shoo, chillun—shoo!
He huntin' atter you!
"Whar' is you
En yo' fambly, too?"
Shoo, chillun—shoo!

De bumbshell, he go sizzin' 'long—
Shoo, chillun—shoo!
En night en day he sing dat way:
"Whar'—whar' is you?"

Shoo, chillun—shoo!
He huntin' atter you!
"Whar' is you
En yo' fambly, too?"
Shoo, chillun—shoo!

A LESSON OF FIRE

EF 'Lijah gone ter glory in a cheeryoot er fire
Don't you t'ink dat he wuz sco'chin' on de way?
Don't you t'ink dat all his cloze
Bu'n clean off him, ter his toes,
En he headed fer de water right away?

Oh, believers,
What you gwine ter do
Ef fire sco'ch you on de way,
En w'en you git dar, too!

W'en de rich man wuz a-eatin' er his 'possum en his pie
En Latherus wuz hongry at de do',
Did he t'ink he gwine ter die
Fo' de sun rise in de sky,
En roas' up in fire down below?

Oh, believers,
  What you gwine ter do
W'en de fire roas' de 'possum
  En de howlin' sinner, too!

A LAZY CITIZEN

O I DES so lazy dat I dunno what ter do!
I see de Sun a-ridin' in a purty ben' er blue,
En he say: "I never idle on de river bank, lak' you!"
But I des so lazy dat I dunno what ter do!

O I des so lazy dat I dunno what ter do!
De yaller fly light on me, en I never tell him "Shoo!"
En de bee a huntin' honey in de daisies en de dew,
But I des so lazy dat I dunno what ter do!

I des so lazy dat I dunno what ter do!
De River quollin' at me, en de Jaybird jawin', too;
Dey 'low: "You des so triflin' dat de grass ketch up wid you!"
But I des so lazy dat I dunno what ter do!

HIS FIRST SCHOOL DAYS

HE sich a li'l' feller,
But he min' de teacher rule,
En take his books en toddle
On his li'l' feet, ter school.

His mammy stan' en watch 'im—
So mannish, gwine by!
She hidin' wid her apern
De teardrap in her eye!

De fus' time dat she ever
Done miss his play en song;
'Tain't no ways ter de schoolhouse,
En yit de road look long!

He gwine in de worl', now,
But what's de prize ter win
Ef dat sweet, li'l' feller
Don't come back home ag'in?

He sich a li'l' feller,—
  He larnin' fine to-day!
But still his mammy miss 'im,
  Kaze dat his mammy way!

HE SLEEPIN' SO

HE never tired—him dat sleep
Whar' col' de graveya'd shadders creep;
He never feel de winter snow,
Or heah de wolf howl at his do'.
He never toss, dar, on his bed,
Hongry fer des one crust er bread!
He safe f'um all de storms dat blow,
He sleepin' so—he sleepin' so!

He done fergit, de whole worl' roun',
How rich man hol' de po' man down.
How dat he feel de lash en load
En fall down, trimblin', on de road!
He dunno dat he got de bes'
He ever had, in res'—sweet res'!
He safe f'um all de storms dat blow,
He sleepin' so—he sleepin' so!

A SONG OF MISTER SATAN

SATAN never come
Wid a bangin' er de drum,
Wid de blowin' er de bugle-ho'n;
He des lay low,
En he creep up slow,
En he leave no track—
Lak' a rabbit in de snow;
But he got you, sho' ez you bo'n!

He up en 'way
At de breakin' er de day,
'Fo' de lark done light in de co'n;
En he lif' his hat
Whar' de sinner at,
En he projick roun'
'Twell he lay 'im flat,
En he got you, sho' ez you bo'n!

O, sinner, come 'long
Ter de gospel song,—
Don't wait fer de bugle-ho'n;
Fer Satan lay low,
En he creep up slow,
En he leave no track—
Lak' a rabbit in de snow;
But he got you, sho' ez you bo'n!

BANJO SONG

HOP light, ladies,—ben' yo' head;
'Possum-pie en ginger bread!
Rabbit run f'um de white man gun;
Moccasin quoil up in de sun,
Blacksnake give a supper hot,
Lizard stew in a b'ilin' pot;
Kingsnake come ter de banquet hall,
Swaller blacksnake—soup, en all!

PROBLEMS

DEY took en treed de 'possum
Des 'bout de break er day;
De tree fall on de hunter,
En de 'possum he git 'way!

De rabbit gone ter meetin'—
Dey b'iled him, en dey fried;
De blacksnake bite de preacher,
En den de blacksnake died!

Dey sont de missionary
Ter whar' de heathen stay;
Dey chopped him inter mincemeat
En eat him up dat day!

It's trouble, trouble, trouble,—
I dunno what ter say;
Fer when you runs de rabbit
He goes de yuther way!

THE PREACHER AND THE 'POSSUM

WE had a 'possum supper—
De preacher come ter see;
But dey wa'n't a bit er 'possum
Fer de chillun, or fer me!

Fer de preacher ax a blessin'
En pass his plate en cup,
En des in 'bout a minute
He eat de 'possum up!

He say: "I likes de gravy,
I likes de 'taters, too;
It takes a whole, fat 'possum
To pull de preacher th'oo'!"

He ax des one mo' blessin',
Den pile his plate en cup;
En scoop in all de dressin',—
Des eat de 'possum up!

En den he climb de pulpit,
  En fer de tex' he reach;
But couldn't say a single word,
  Kaze he too full ter preach!

At las' he up en tol' 'em:
  "Dis weather mos' too col';
I gwine home, believers,
  En res' my suff'rin' soul!"

MISTER RABBIT'S LOVE AFFAIR

ONE day w'en Mister Rabbit wuz a-settin' in de grass
He see Miss Mary comin', en he wouldn't let her pass,
Kaze he know she lookin' purty in de river lookin'glass,
O Mister Rabbit, in de mawnin'!

But de Mockin'bird wuz singin' in de blossom en de dew,
En he know 'bout Mister Rabbit, en he watchin' er 'im, too;
En Miss Mary heah his music, en she tell 'im "Howdy-do!"
O Mister Rabbit, in de mawnin'!

Mister Rabbit 'low he beat 'im, en he say he'll
l'arn ter sing,
En he tried it all de winter, en he kep' it up in
spring;
But he wuzn't buil' fer singin', kaze he lack de
voice en wing,—
Goodby, Mister Rabbit, in de mawnin'!

ONE OF THE FAITHFUL

DEY talkin' on de scripters en a-changin' 'em erbout,
En takin' all de sweetness er de ol'-time Bible out;
Dey preachin' en dey teachin' in de stranges' sorter way,
But I raise up in de Bible en I holdin' dar terday!

I heahs 'em in de pulpits des a-mixin' up de tex'—
A-tellin' folks 'bout dis worl' en de doin's er de nex';
Dey don't believe in Jonah, en Joshua's laid away;
But de Bible interdooced 'em, en I holdin' dar terday!

I turns de ol'-time pages, en ever'whar' I see
De promises like rainbows in de storm dat's over me;

I pass th'oo' fiery trials en cross de rivers wide,
En reach de pleasant pastur's on de shinin' other side.
In de valley er de shadder it's sweet ez sweet kin be—
A rod en staff ter comfort en a lamp dat shines fer me;
A fr'en' dat's still onfailin'—de trues' en de bes'—
A light dat's in de winder when we gwine home ter res'.

Dat's why I holdin' ter it; I read its meanin' plain;
It sen' me all my sunshine en de Lawd is in de rain;
Dey's teachin' en dey's preachin' in ever' sorter way,
But I raise up in de Bible en I holdin' dar terday!

GOT TER FIGHT IT OUT

W'EN de Lawd is good ter people en He
rain de blessin's down,
Dat's de time dey feel dey fodder, en go struttin'
all eroun';
Fergit ter go ter meetin', whar' de mo'ners pray
en shout—
Dey gits so fat en sassy dat day got ter fight it
out!

Dey goes eroun' a-blowin' f'um de springtime ter
de fall;
Dey looks down on de country, en dey reaches fer
it all;
De worl' ain't what dey wants it, en de Bible is
in doubt,—
Dey des so fat en sassy dat dey 'bleege ter fight
it out!

De birds don't sing ter please 'em—de fiddle los' its chune;
Dey wants de seven stars, suh, en a big slice er de moon;
Dey breshin' 'gin each yuther in de country roun' erbout,—
Dey des so fat en sassy dat dey 'bleege ter fight it out!

En de Lawd—He don't say nuttin'—He des le'm go erlong
'Twell trouble come en ketch 'em, en dey fin' out dey wuz wrong;
Den dey comes inter de meetin', en dey wants ter pray en shout,—
Dey des so po' en humble, dey too weak ter fight it out!

HIS FALL FROM GRACE

BR'ER WILLIAMS wuz a-sayin', in de public meetin'-place,
He counted it a privilege ter fall away f'um grace;
Fer though de fall wuz heavy w'en you lef' de shinin' track,
Dar wuz lots er joy, believers, in de comin'—comin' back!

"You knows," he says, "de los' sheep, what missin' f'um de fol'
W'en de night wuz dark en rainy, en de win' a-blowin' col'?
Well, de Shepa'd lef' de yuthers, en he never satisfy
'Twell he ketch up wid de los' sheep, en he lan' 'im high en dry!"

Now, dat wuz his contendin', en he talk it right
erlong,
'Twell de yuther ol' backsliders raise a halleluia
song!
But de preacher sorter study, ez he lookin' cross
de hall,
'Bout de many times Br'er Williams had been hav-
in' er a fall!

"You fall," he say, "on Monday—des take de
road wid sin;—
En den, on Tuesday mawnin', please God, you
down erg'in!
Now, don't you call dat triflin'? W'en Wednes-
day roll eroun',
Des 'bout de time you git up, once mo' you hits
de groun'!

"You in de fallin' business; you never gwine ter
rise
En read yo' shinin' titles ter mansions in de skies!

Fer w'en yo' climbs de ladder what reach de jasper wall,
You'll heah ol' Satan holler: 'I'll ketch you w'en you fall!' "

Br'er Williams riz in meetin' en tell 'im: "Dat'll do!
I lef' de fallin' business—I gwine 'long wid you!
En now, I gwine ter tell you, ef any grace fer me,
I gwine ter keep on risin' so high yo' des can't see!"

WHEN BELLS RING HOME TO REST

SOWIN' time en reapin',
  Doin' er de bes';
Dar'll be time fer sleepin'
  W'en de bells ring home ter res'!

See de shadders creepin'
  Over f'um de wes';
Time 'll come fer sleepin'
  W'en de bells ring home ter res'.

Troubles come contrary—
  Yit, de Lawd'll bless,
W'en you feelin' weary
  De bells 'll ring ter res'.

A PEACE'BUL FAMBLY MAN

OH, de sun shine hot in ever' spot
En de young co'n wavin' green;
En de cotton needin' choppin'
Des de wuss you ever seen!
En I ain't got time fer fightin',
Kaze de grass 'll take de lan';
En de plow en hoe is all I know—
I a peace'bul fambly man!

Go 'long wid dat musket!
I buil' on a diff'unt plan;
De craps mus' grow,
En de whole worl' know
I a peace'bul fambly man!

Oh, de sun shine hot in ever' spot
En de hot san' bu'n yo' feet;
En de Co'n, he say: "Please plow dis way,
Kaze I pa'ch up wid de heat!"

En I ain't got time fer fightin',
  Kaze de grass 'll make a stan';
En de plow en hoe is all I know,—
  I a peace'bul fambly man!

Go 'long wid dat musket!
  I buil' on a diff'unt plan;
De craps mus' grow,
En de whole worl' know
  I a peace'bul fambly man!

JUST FROM GEORGIA

BILL'S COURTSHIP

I

BILL looked happy as could be
One bright mornin'; an' says he:
"Folks has been a-tellin' me
Mollie's set her cap my way;
An' I'm goin' thar' to-day
With the license; so, ol' boy,
Might's well shake, an' wish me joy!
Never seen a woman yit
This here feller couldn't git!"

II

Now, it happened, that same day,
I'd been lookin' Mollie's way;—
Jest had saddled my ol' hoss
To go canterin' across

Parson Jones's pastur', an'
Ax her fer her heart an' han'!
So, when Bill had had his say
An' done set his weddin' day,
I lit out an' rid that way.

III

Mollie met me at the door:—
"Glad to see yer face once more!"
She—says she: "Come in—come in!"
("It's the best man now will win,"
Thinks I to myself.) Then she
Brung a rocker out fer me
On the cool piazza wide,
With her own chair right 'longside!

IV

In about two hours I knowed
In that race I had the road!
Talked in sich a winnin' way
Got her whar' she named the day,

With her shiny head at rest
On my speckled Sunday vest!
An', whilst in that happy state,
Bill—he rid up to the gate.

V

Well, sir-ee! . . . He sot him down—
Cheapest lookin' chap in town!
(Knowed at once I'd set my traps!)
Talked 'bout weather, an' the craps,
An' a thousan' things; an' then—
Jest the lonesomest o' men—
Said he had so fur to ride,
Reckoned it wuz time to slide!

VI

But I hollered out: "Ol' boy,
Might's well shake, an' wish me joy!
I hain't seen the woman yit
That this feller couldn't git!"

THE SWEETHEART HE LOVED LONG AGO

MOLLY is fixin' to marry—Jenny is livin' away,
An' the boys hain't been back at the ol' home in many an' many a day.
An' somehow the spring's lost its sweetness, an' lonesome an' long falls the snow,
An' nothin' is left but the pictur' o' the sweetheart I loved long ago.

I never was one fer complainin'—but somethin' seems lost from life's skies,
An' allus in sunshine it's rainin'—it's rainin' eroun' my ol' eyes!
Fer here's whar' their arms was eroun' me—an' here's whar' *she* smiled on me so,
An' all that is left is the pictur' o' the sweetheart I loved long ago.

The medder still feels the lark's shadder, an' frequent I hear the birds sing,
Jest as ef nothin' had happened to all the red roses o' spring!
Jest as they sung at her weddin'. But how kin the singin' birds know
That nothin' is left but the pictur' o' the sweetheart I loved long ago?

Nothin'? Thar's Molly a-comin' an' bringin' a rose to me.—Well,
Life's story's tol' over an' over, till nothin' is new that we tell.
Her arms roun' my neck, an' her blue eyes in tears at my takin' on so;
Kiss me, dear—fer you're jest like the pictur' of the sweetheart I loved long ago!

JIM'S BEST MAN

'FORE Jim got married he says—says he:
"I wants you to stan' up, ol' chap, with me
As one o' the groomsmen; an' Sally—she
Is one o' the bridesmaids that'll be."
"All right," I says, an' I fixed up fine
An' stood with Jim in the marriage line.

Now Sally—as any one could see—
Fer 'bout a year had been lovin' me,
An' I'd been married 'fore Jim, ef they
Hadn't been nothin' in the way.
But though Jim liked me, he says, says he,
I warn't fer Sally, ner she fer me!

I thought it wuz kinder mean o' Jim—
That so much happiness come to him—
That the cup of his joy wuz full—complete,
An' he grudged me all that made life sweet!

That, havin' a heart he could call his own
He could see me travelin' on *alone!*

Well, the night o' the marriage thar' Sal stood—
The rosiest bit o' womanhood
That ever slipped out o' the red retreat
Of a garden whar' *ever*' flower is sweet!
I looked at Sally—she looked at me;
Thinks I: "*Two* weddin's is what *should* be!"

Jim wuz a-shakin' like anything—
Tripped on the carpet, an' drapped the ring;
But finally said, fer peace er strife
He'd take Mirandy along through life.
An' Mirandy—purty nigh skeered as him,
Said, on them conditions she'd take Jim.

Clost to Sally I'd took my stan':
All of a sudden I grabbed her han',
Whilst the people wondered at what would be,—
Sayin': "Sally, jest say them words to me!

Thar's the license—all good an' straight,
All made out fer the married state!"

Jim wuz speechless—'twuz *better* so,
Kaze he couldn't *object* to the thing, you know!
An' whilst he stood in the speechless way
An' hadn't a single word to say,
Sal tol' the parson to go ahead,
An' I answered his words 'fore the words wuz said!

When Jim recovered—got back to life—
Sally wuz jest as much my wife
As Mirandy his! . . . An' he says, says he:
"That's a purty trick that you played on me!
But take her, with all that the Lord kin sen'!"
(*That* warn't no use, kaze I *had* her then!)

AT THE MEETIN'

THE meetin'-house wuz crowded, but atter lookin' 'roun'
I foun' a seat by Mollie, an' thar' I settled down.
'Twuz jest the place I wanted—the dearest in the worl'—
The roses on her red cheeks a-kissin' curl on curl!

The ribbons like a rainbow runnin' roun' her purty throat—
Fer lookin' at an' lovin' her I couldn't sing a note!
Text wuz, "Love one another"—it suited well my case,
An' brought the tell-tale blushes to Mollie's smilin' face!

'Twuz jest the finest sermon I'd heard fer many a day;
It lit the skies with promise an' smoothed the rocky way;
An' that smile o' Mollie's made me jest the happiest o' men:
She looked so like a angel that I got religion then!

AN OLD-TIME SINGER

I DON'T want any hymnbook when the Methodists is nigh,
A-linin' out the ol' ones that went thrillin' to the sky
In the ol' campmeetin' seasons, when 'twuz "Glory hallelu!"
An' "Brother, rise an' tell us what the Lord has done fer you!"

Fer I know them songs so perfect that when I git the swing
O' the tune they want to go to I kin shet my eyes an' sing!
"On Jordan's stormy banks," an' ol' "Amazin' Grace"—they seem
So nat'ral, I'm like someone that's singin' in a dream!

Oh, when it comes to them ol' songs I allus does my part;
An' I've got the ol'-time Bible down, as you might say, "by heart!"

When the preacher says the fust word in the giv-
in' of his text
I smile with satisfaction, kaze I know what's com-
in' next!

The wife says: "That's amazin'!" an' the preacher
says—says he,
With lots o' meanin' in his voice, an' lookin'
queer at me—
"'Sence you know more o' the Bible than the best
o' us kin teach,
Don't you think you orter practice what you're
payin' us to preach?"

Well, *that* gits me in a *corner*—an' I sorter raise
my eyes
An' the tune about them titles to the "mansions
in the skies"!
I want the benediction then—I'm ready to depart!
But when it comes to singin'—well, I've got the
hymns by heart!

"ON THE SHELF"

HE gits roun' now on jest one peg
To beat the very lan'!
Thank God, he's only got one leg—
They won't take my ol' man.
(He lost that leg in our last war,
But I could never tell what fer!)

I sets an' sees him hobblin' roun'—
They's sojers passin' through,
An' "Dixie's" wakin' up the town;
An' "Yankee Doodle," too.
I hears him holler: "Hip, hooray!"
(Thank God, they can't take *him* away!)

He seen his fightin' days; he went
With Jackson an' with Lee;
An' now he's come to be content
To set roun' home with me.

He's lost one leg. That's gone fer *shore*—
(Thank God, he'll never lose no more!)

But when the ban' plays "Dixie"—My!
It sets him wild ag'in!
He cheers the boys a-trompin' by,
An' want's to j'ine in!
But I—I says: "Come, that'll do!
They don't want one-leg folks like you."

So let 'em fight from left to right
All over sea an' lan';
I thank the Lord by day an' night
They won't take my ol' man!
He's lost one leg. That's gone fer *shore*—
(Thank God, he'll never lose no more!)

THE CALL OF THE ANGELS

I

LYIN' thar', patient, from day to day—
Wearin' his poor little life away,
But never complainin', an' when she cried—
His mother, settin' thar' at his side,
Layin' his han' in hers—so kin',
An' tellin' her: "Mother, never min'!"
Though he knowed well, an' we wuz shore
Death wuz waitin' outside the door!
"I'd like to stay whar' my own folks be,
But I hear the angels callin' me!"
(Poor litter feller! so pale an' slim—
What did the angels want with him?)

II

Lyin' thar', patient, from night to night,
An' she like a ghost in the lonesome light—

His mother—holdin' his han' as though
Not even fer Death would she let him go!
An' hearin' the win', so soft an' sweet,
An' sayin': "It's the fall o' the angels' feet!
I'd like to stay whar' my own folks be,
But they're allus callin'—callin' me!"
An' still with his eyes on her face, so kin',
An' whisperin': "Mother, never min'!"
(Poor litter feller! so pale an' slim—
What did the angels want with him?)

III

Lyin' thar' sleepin', from day to day,
Under the green leaves, an' under the gray—
It's long sence the angels took him away!
An' the mother kneels in the dark to pray,
An' she says, when the nights air long an' chill,
She feels his han' in her own han' still!
But she knows it wuz God's an' the angels' will.
But as fer me, from day to day,
An' night to night, I hear him say

(Fer all the comfort they bring to me):
"I'd like to stay whar' my own folks be!"
(Poor litter feller! so pale an' slim—
What did the angels want with him?)

A RURAL COMEDY

THINGS is never goin' right,
(Life is *so* contrary!)
Thought I'd go that winter night
An' speak the word to Mary.

Never seen her look so sweet,
(Jest like any fairy!)
Kitten purrin' at her feet,—
Me, six yards from Mary!

Tol' her that 'twuz like to snow—
All the weather showed it;
Looked as ef we'd have a blow,
Simply said: "She *knowed* it!"

Talked o' this, an' talked o' that
  Till my tongue got weary;
Made remarks erbout the cat,
  But still kep' fur from Mary!

Ol' clock ticked an' ticked away,
  (Wished her heart 'twould soften!)
Couldn't find the word to say,
  Though I tried it often.

Time to go, an' leave them charms,—
  Sence I couldn't win 'em!
Yawned, an' sorter stretched my arms,
  An'—praise God!—she fell in 'em!

Don't these women know a sight?
  Ain't they all contrary?
Didn't say the word that night,
  An' yit, I'll marry Mary!

'CROST THE HILLS TO GEORGY

"'CROST the hills to Georgy"—we wuz fur away,
An' the land aroun' wuz lonesome, an' all the skies wuz gray;
But allus she wuz singin', beneath the hopeless sky:
"'Crost the hills to Georgy—we'll git thar' by an' by!"

"'Crost the hills to Georgy"—we'd left the folks so long,
The tears would come a-fallin' with the music o' the song!
But allus she wuz singin', with teardraps in her eye:
"'Crost the hills to Georgy—we'll git thar' by an' by!"

"'Crost the hills to Georgy"—an' many a heart
would beat:—
It brought to min' the valleys—the medders green
an' sweet.
We heard the birds a-singin' beneath the clear,
blue sky:
"'Crost the hills to Georgy—we'll git thar' by an'
by!"

"'Crost the hills to Georgy," from many a lone-
some shore;
"'Crost the hills to Georgy"—we're goin' home
once more!
An' still her sweet voice singin', an' hearts a-beat-
in' high:
"'Crost the hills to Georgy—we'll git thar' by an'
by!"

We saw the wild flowers bloomin'—we saw the
daisies foam;
We heard the bells a-ringin' the songs o' love an'
home.

But a woman's voice still cheered us, beneath the stormy sky:
"'Crost the hills to Georgy—we'll git thar' by an' by!"

An' we reached the plains an' valleys we loved in days of old,
An' our friends come out to meet us, an' stories sweet wuz told,
Of them that had been waitin' with the teardrap in the eye:
"'Crost the hills to Georgy"—we got thar' by an' by!

THE CAPTAIN'S COAT OF GRAY

OL' Confed'rit buttons, sleeves with braid o' gold,
An' here an' thar' a bullet mark the story of it told;
An' they stopped before the winder an' blocked the busy way
To see a simple thing like that—the captain's coat o' gray!

The vet'ran who had fought with Lee, an' faced the fight that day
When the thunder rolled the loudest roun' "Stone-wall" Jackson's way,
With his empty sleeve breshed back the tear—the tear that wouldn't stay—
To see that ol' coat hangin' thar'—the captain's coat o' gray.

Ol' times come rushin' over him—he heard the
war drums then,—
The shoutin' o' the captains an' the rallyin' o' the
men;
An' mebbe saw the droopin' flags o'er green
graves fur away,—
A surgin' flood o' mem'ries in the captain's coat
o' gray.

An' a woman stopped, an' bowed her head an'
sighed—an' mebbe *she*
Wuz thinkin' o' the loved ones lost beneath the
flag with Lee;
Then some one whistled "Dixie," an' the crowd
broke out: "Hooray!
An' three cheers fer the captain, an' the captain's
coat o' gray!"

An' they give 'em! They went ringin' from that
rainy street, on high;—
'Peared like they shook the winders in the ever-
lastin' sky!

You talk erbout "war sperrit"—they had it thar' that day,
Caused by that unknown captain, who wore that coat o' gray!

That crowd wuz patriotic! You heard the war-heart beat,
An' the feller whistlin' "Dixie" wuz the hero o' the street!
An' not a man that heard him, but made the rainy way
Ring with three cheers fer "Dixie" an' the captain's coat o' gray!

Ol' Confed'rit buttons—sleeves with braid o' gold,
An' here an' thar' a bullet mark the story of it told;
The story of the glory that wuz shinin' thar' that day,
Over a simple thing like that—the captain's coat o' gray!

THE CREMATION OF JINKS

(AND WHAT CAME OF IT)

JINKS favored of cremation, an' give directions plain,
That when he left this vale o' tears, to jine the heavenly train,—
When they heard the angels call him acrost ol' Jordan's foam,
They'd burn his body to a crisp and take the ashes home.

His good wife up an' tol' him thar' warn't no wood to spar'
An' that ef he'd jest wait awhile they'd burn him over thar'!
But he left his plain instructions; an' so, the day he died
We burnt his body 'fore he reached the blazin' "other side."

An' ever' day his wife would set, with teardraps on her lashes,
An' moan, an' groan, an' sigh, an' fret—beholdin' of his ashes,
Till she took another comforter—as most o' widders do,
An' had six cooks a-makin' o' the weddin' barbecue.

An' that's whar' come the trouble! . . . The cooks run short o' spice
An' pepper, an' sich seasonin', that make a dinner nice;
An', findin' Jinks's ashes, hid in a corner dim,
They took him fer black pepper, an' spiced the meats with him!

The widder foun' it out too late; but nothin' could she do:
The guests declar'd they'd never eat a finer barbecue!

An' the widder kep' the secret, an' long her sorrow nursed
Fer that second husband's weddin' feast, they seasoned with the first!

MY OL' MAN

MY ol' man—he can't go to sea;
He ain't no sailor, an' he'll never be;
His place is home with the boys an' me,
Fer to light the fire in the mornin'!

An' he jest can't march with that leg of his,
Kaze it's all stove up with the rheumatiz,
An' his place is here, whar' the homestead is,
Fer to light the fire in the mornin'!

They's lots 'sides him fer to go an' fight,
Fer he's fond o' peace an' his pipe at night,
An' he don't do well when he's out my sight,
So he'll light the fire in the mornin'!

THE VILLAGE DOCTOR

JEST had one doctor in the town—the country's
joy an' pride,
Who 'tended of us up an' down—a-goin' fur an'
wide
From settlement to settlement, acrost the fiel's an'
hills;
A fustrate han' at measles, an' a graduate on chills.

But it come to pass one mornin' when the sun
come up the skies
An' the sleepy worl' wuz risin' an' a-rubbin' of
its eyes,
To the country's consternation an' its terrible sur-
prise
The doctor read his titles cl'ar to mansions in the
skies!

Jest went the way o' all flesh—wuz laid upon the
shelf;
He who'd saved folks from dyin' whirled in an'
died himself!

We done our best to save him—jest agonized in prayer,
But we couldn't git no doctor to prescribe the bill o' fare.

An' so, the doctor went away to j'ine the heavenly throng;
He couldn't take the medicine he'd mixed fer *us* so long;
An' then there come more measles—more earthquake-rackin' chills
Than ever had been hearn of in the valleys or the hills!

Then we 'p'inted a committee to search the country roun',
Till another fust-class doctor fer the settlement wuz foun'.
An' they tromped from Brown to Billville—a-goin' day an' night,
An' pitched their tents fer business when the doctors hove in sight.

They advertised fer doctors, an' brotherin', here they come,
Like a regiment a-risin' to the wil' tap o' the drum!
Thar' wuz fifteen hundred of 'em, all ready with their bills,
Fustrate han's at measles, an' graduates on chills.

The committee looked 'em over an' questioned 'em a bit;
But most of 'em wuz ol' an' gray, an' didn't 'pear to fit,
Or fill the bill we wanted; they come in, score by score—
Enough to kill a regiment, an' then look roun' fer more!

But the sense o' the committee—also the chairman's view—
Wuz, what the country wanted wuz a doctor that wuz *new!*

"The ol' books," said the chairman, "the ol'-time doctors read,
I'd like to state, air out o' date, an' them ain't what we need!

"We want a right *young* feller that's graduated *new*,—
As fresh as any daisy in the sunshine an' the dew;
One with a big diploma, with a bran' new seal o' red,
With all the new diseases playin' leapfrog in his head!"

So they turned the ol'-time doctors down, an' got a young chap,—well,
He knowed more new diseases than the dictionaries tell!
An' though we're poor an' humble the country roun' erbout,
We kin have "appendicitis" now an' all the new things out!

THE BILLVILLE DIVIDE

IT'S the funniest thing, I reckon, that a feller ever heard,
An' you're goin' to kinder doubt it an' look jubious, I'm afeared;
But it's true as any preachin', an' it's jest as broad as wide,
An' now I'm going to tell you 'bout the Billville town divide.

You see, we've got a town here? That is, we kinder had,
'Fore the lawyers hung their shingles an' jes' driv the people mad.
But I ain't a-wranglin' with 'em; it's the *story* I'm a-givin',
Fer a town kin live with lawyers, but *the lawyers—does the livin'!*

Fust off, we had a Baptis' church—it kinder got
in debt,
An' the sheriff's 'bout decided that it's six mile
in it yit!
They got to fightin' 'bout the lot—each feller had
his views;
Then the lawyers got the pulpit, then the shingles,
an' the pews.

An' next we built a schoolhouse, an' had to run
a bill;
Then the board o' eddication, *they* got mad enough
to kill,
An' went to law erbout it—can't tell the *why* er
how,
But the lawyers got the schoolhouse, an' they're
running of it *now!*

An' next, here come the town hall—that's it jest
'crost the way;
The council had to make a bond, an' then they
couldn't pay;

An' so, they went to lawin' fer the cash they
couldn't raise,
An' the lawyers got the town hall, and the may-
or's turned out to graze!

An' next—here come the grocery store—the only
one in town;
The grocery man wuz honest, an' he marked his
prices down
An' smashed long 'fore he knowed it, fer his bills
wuz fallin' due,
An' the lawyers—well, they're kinder in the gro-
cery business, too!

An' next we got a railroad, with a sign that made
a show:
'Twuz "Look out fer the engine when you hear
the whistle blow!"
We wuz proud o' it as preachin'—put a flag up at
the tanks,
Fer our train wuz second cousin to the flyin'
"Nancy Hanks."

But stockholders got to grumblin', an' one drizzly, mizzly night
The engine struck a feller an' jest knocked him out o' sight.
An' then here come a lawsuit; the stock—it took a fall,
An' the lawyers, bein' *receivers*, received the road an' all!

Now, you see, they got the meetin'-house, the schoolhouse, too, an' then
The town hall went a squealin' like a shoat into their pen;
An' then, the village grocery store, an' last o' all, the road—
An' the brass ban's blowin' fer 'em, jest the best it ever blowed!

So now, when they'd jest gobbled all, did *they* git in a fight,
An' go to law, an' fuss an' jaw, an' cuss from left to right?

Not much! Why, brotherin', lawyers is the lovin'est o' folks—
They're full o' life an' laughter; make you split yer sides with *jokes*.

No!—the lawyers give a *dinner*, an' they jest invited down
What little o' the town wuz left to represent the town;
An' when they'd all got seated, a feller on one side
Riz up an' said: "We're here tonight to have the great divide."

Then they shared the shinin' proceeds o' the meetin'-house, the hall,
The grocery store, the school-house, an' the railroad tanks an' all;
An' when they'd done the sharin', an' 'twuz gittin' time to go,
They sung "Old Hundred," an' praised God from whom all blessin's flow!

Now, this here is the story, an' the moral I'm
a-givin'
Is, a town kin live with lawyers, but—the lawyers
does the livin'.
We use to have a town here that was jest the coun-
try's pride,
But now, it's known to people as "The Billville
Big Divide"!

A SPRING DAY IN WINTER

WARN'T a cloud in all the skies—
Not any wintry warnin';
Sun riz up an' rubbed his eyes
An' 'peared to say "Good-mornin'!
Jest bring yer roses to my sight
An' I'll jest kiss 'em red an' white!"

The river went a-crawlin' 'long,
So drowsy an' so lazy!
A mockin'bird broke out in song,
A dewdrap foun' a daisy.
An' nigh the water lilies swishin'
A feller sorter dreamed o' fishin'!

'Peared like the worl' wuz drowned in light,
An' in the blue above you
You saw yer sweetheart's eyes so bright,
An' heard her say, "I love you!"
'Twuz spring in winter—flower an' song,
Sunshine an' love the whole day long!

THE BILLVILLE SPIRIT MEETING

WE had a sperrit meetin' (we'll never have
no more!)
To call up all the sperrits of them that's "gone
before."
A feller called a "medium" (he wuz of medium
size),
Took the contract fer the fetchin' o' them sperrits
from the skies.

The mayor—the town council—the parson an' his
wife,
Come to shake han's with them sperrits what had
left the other life;
The Colonel an' the Major—the coroner, an' all
Wuz waitin' an' debatin' in the darkness o' the
hall.

The medium roared, "Silence! Amanda Jones
appears!
Is her husband present?" ("No, sir—he's been
restin' twenty years!")
"Here's the ghost of Sally Spilkins, from the lan'
whar' glories glow:
Would her husband like to see her?" (An' a
feeble voice said, "*No!*")

"Here's the wife of Colonel Buster; she wears a
heavenly smile:
She wants to see the Colonel, an' she's comin'
down the aisle!"
Then all wuz wild confusion—it warn't a bit o'
fun!—
With "Lord, have mercy on me," the Colonel
broke an' run!

Then the coroner got skeery an' scampered fer
his life!
"Stop—stop him!" said the medium; "here
comes his second wife!"

But thar' warn't a man could stop him in that
whole blame settlement,—
He turned a double summersault an' out the
winder went!

Then, the whole town council follered an' hollered
all the way;
The parson said he had a call 'bout ten miles off,
to pray!
He didn't preach nex' Sunday, an' they tell it
roun' a bit,
Accordin' to the best reports the parson's runnin'
yit!

THE BOYS ARE THERE

I KEEP a-readin' the papers, for the mother she says, says she:
"I reckon they'll have some news to-day of the fightin' over the sea.
I wish that the war was ended!" That is her daily prayer.
(She made a flag for the regiment, and she knows that the boys are there!)

I 'mind me how that mornin' when we heard the bugles blow
An' the bright brigades were formin', she told the boys to go!
How they left their farewell kisses on her lips an' silver hair,
An' marched away for the flag that day. . . .
She knows that the boys are there!

For many a message has come to her 'crost the
ocean's foamy track:
"The flag still waves o'er the regiment—we're
beatin' the rebels back!"
An' "Love an' life to you, mother, 'neath the
home skies sweet an' fair."
Oh, her heart's at sea with her country, for she
knows that the boys are there.

But when, in the evenin' shadows, the wail o' the
wind she hears,
She looks afar where the broad seas are, through
a silent rain of tears;
An' I say—I say: "They'll be home some day;
there'll be a step on the stair,
An' brave, strong arms around you of the boys
who are fightin' there!"

An' that is her sweetest comfort, an' her tears
they cease to flow;
"Oh, I 'mind me—oh, I 'mind me how I told the
boys to go!"

"Yes, an' you made a flag for them!—the flag of
your country fair—"
With her head on my breast she whispers: "I'm
glad that the boys are there!"

WITH JOHNSON'S BAND

WHEN Johnson's band wuz playing, how
music thrilled the land;
The Chattahoochee stayed its tide that day for
Johnson's Band!
The birds in greening branches were mute on
every hand,—
They heard a wilder music that day, from John-
son's Band!

"Way Down in Old Kentucky"—such tunes as
make you sigh;
And gentle "Annie Laurie," and "Comin' Thro'
the Rye;"
And "Dixie"—"Yankee Doodle"—a fellow
couldn't stand
And keep his feet from shuffling that day, with
Johnson's Band!

The Major and the Colonel — they threw their coats aside;
The old town Marshal shouted: "Here! make the circle wide!"
The Major took the center — the Marshal gave command;
They danced a Georgia break-down that day to Johnson's Band!

Then in came Deacon Jenkins, as lively as could be;
He shouted to the Colonel: "Make room—make room for me!"
Then, Brother Williams joined 'em—'twas fun on every hand,
To see those old chaps dancing that day, to Johnson's Band!

They danced all round the circle—'twuz "Glory in yer soul!"
And "Keep the fiddles going, and let the music roll!

This ain't no time for sighin' in this delighted
land!"
"Hooray!" the people shouted — "Hooray for
Johnson's Band!"

There never wuz such music, or such a merry day;
The Major and the Colonel danced every hour
away!
And when the dance wuz over, you heard on
every hand:
"Three cheers for Mr. Johnson, and Mr. John-
son's Band!"

COMRADES

WAR ain't over—not a bit!
Every night 'at comes
Bill and me (*been* thar', you see!)
Jes' muster all the drums!
An' while the sparks air flyin',
An' the fire—it cracks away;
We fight an' fight from left to right—
The Blue ag'in' the Gray.

War ain't over—bet yer life!
Bill wuz Union; so,
Lights his pipe, an' then he's ripe
Fer argyment, you know.
Swears he whipped us, fust an' last,
An' might be at it *still;*
When ol' Bull Run jines in the fun,
An' I git one on Bill!

We talk an' talk, an' have our say—
  Go over all the groun';
An' Bill, he makes the war his way,
  An' then jes' lays it down!
But I keep close up on his trail,
  An' keep on firin' till
He says, says he: "Can't git 'roun' *me!*"
  Then I git one on Bill!

But all so friendly! What's the use
  In bein' otherwise?
Sence we've done turned the blame thing
      loose,
  The Lord's sent brighter skies!
An' Bill an' me (been thar', you see!)
  Jes' argy kaze we will;
An' Bill gits one on me—all fun—
  An' I git one on Bill!

WHEN SALLY PLAYED THE BANJO

WHEN Sally played the banjo an' I danced
—danced away,
Thar' wuz not a happier feller in the settlement
that day!
Her cheeks, I know, wuz redder than the roses o'
the spring,
An' I danced the "double-shuffle," an' I cut the
"pigeon-wing"!

When Sally played the banjo, I kivered all the
groun';
She could hardly play fer laughin' at the way I
hopped eroun'!
I never did git tired, ner ever stopped fer breath,
Till I heard the shingles shakin' an' danced the
floor to death!

WHEN SALLY PLAYED THE BANJO

When Sally played the banjo—that time I can't
fergit,
Fer me an' her is married, an' she's playin' of it
'yit!
No matter how I'm feelin' now, I don't stan' any
chance,
Fer when Sally plays the banjo, please God, I've
got to dance!

CHRISTMAS TIMES IN BILL

THAR' ain't no times like ol' times, boys, no matter what they say—
No times that's ever goin' to come like them that's gone away;
An' so, that takes me back ag'in to valley, plain an' hill,
An' all the frosty fields we knowed, an' Christmas times in Bill!

Thar' warn't a single county—an' thar wuz lots, you know—
Could show up finer 'taters, or a fuller cotton row;
An' as fer juicy Mountain Dew—it flowed from ever' still,
An' thar' warn't no purtier women than the gals we sparked in Bill!

Thar' ain't no times like ol' times, boys! I min' one Christmas night,
When the court-house floor wuz sanded, an' the fiddles goin' right,
How we whirled our rosy pardners in the liveliest kind o' way,
An' kissed 'em in the corners, an' danced into the day!

An' how thar' come six weddin's from that Christmas dance, an' how
(I tell you, I kin feel it whar' my heart's a-beatin' now)
I didn't mind the slippery snow that laid as white as foam,
With my arms eroun' the widder on the high road, goin' home!

An' how she said she never—never—*never* could fergit
The husban' what had gone before—wuz mournin' fer him yit!

But when I tol' her that I'd keep that grave o' his
right green,
She leaned ag'in my buzzom—havin' nowhar's
else to lean.

* * * * * * *

Thar' ain't no times like ol' times, boys, no matter
what they say!
Thar' ain't no Christmas times like them we
knowed so fur away;
But Christmas takes me back ag'in to valley, plain
an' hill—
To the dancin' an' the widder that Christmas night
in Bill!

ONE OF THE UNRECONSTRUCTED

THIS talk about "progress" jest floors me!
they're puttin' up buildin's so high
That they shet out the green o' the medders an'
all the blue patches o' sky!
You can't build a house in the country, whar' the
daisies air dressed up in white,
An' the sunflowers foller the sunset, an' 'pear to
be sayin' "Good-night,"
But here comes a railroad a-roarin'! an' the
screech of a whistle! Oh, my!
I'd ruther the woods an' the roses, an' the birds,
an' blue patches o' sky!

This talk about "progress" is tryin' to a feller
that likes to be still
Whar' the mountains jest keep on a-sayin' "We'll
git up to heaven—we will!"

Whar' the rivers don't know any bridges, an' thar's never a rail on a clod,
An' the birds, with gray breasts in the blossoms, air singin' the praises o' God!

This talk about "progress!" Good people, it may be we're goin' too fast!
The buildin's air fine; but, I tell you—ain't one thing on earth that'll last—
'Cept love! an' the jingle o' money is crowdin' love out o' this life—
No time fer the arms o' the children—no time fer the kiss o' the wife!

But it's all right, I reckon! We're movin', as folks say, "from darkness to day,"
An' when the big cities come smokin', the woods must git out o' the way!
But fer all the railroads a-roarin'—the trains that run over each clod—
I'd ruther the sweet rivers singin', an' the mountains that climb close to God!

THE SNOW PROPHET

ALLUS wuz predictin' snow
To the people, high an' low;
When the sun wuz shinin' bright—
"Look out, folks, fer snow to-night!
See it comin'—got my fears—
Biggest snow we've had in years!"

But the night would come an' go—
Not a single flake o' snow!
An' next mornin', in the skies
Same ol' cloudless sun would rise!
"Win'," he'd say, "warn't blowin' right;
But I tell you, *snow's in sight!*"

Well, he went on thataway—
Prophesyin' night an' day—
Allus missin', tell at last,
Said "the time fer snow wuz past."

Then it rained, an' hailed, an' snowed—
Biggest that we ever knowed!

Projickin' next day erbout,
Seen his ol' boots stickin' out
Of a snowbank, deep an' wide;
An', ten minutes 'fore he died,
Hollered out, a layin' low—
"*Didn't I tell you we'd have snow?*"

WHEN YOU AND ME WUZ BOYS

THINGS—they wuzn't better
When you an' me wuz boys;
World to-day is brighter—
Brimmin' full o' joys!

Never hearn the engines
Makin' of a noise;
Never had no telephones
When you an' me wuz boys.

Never seen a street car
Cuttin' up a shine,
Harnessed to a broomstick
An' skeetin' on a line!

Time when we wuz little
An' anybody died
Feller never knowed it
Till they reached the other side!

Now you send a telegram
  Over sea an' groun',
Feller gits an answer
  'Fore he turns aroun'.

Ain't the world a-movin'!
  Never seen the like!
Took an' l'arned the lightnin'
  Jest the place to strike!

Glad I lived to see it—
  Never want to die;
Doubtful ef the angels
  Kin beat it in the sky.

But when my day is over,
  Bet I'll go a hummin'!
Telephone to glory
  An' tell 'em I'm a-comin'!

HE WHISTLED

WHEN craps wuz burnt to flinders,
An' not a rain in sight,
He opened all the winders
An' whistled in the light—
Jest whistled
An' whistled,
Like that 'ud make things bright.

When mortgages wuz growin',
Like weeds by day an' night,
He kep' right on a-hoein'
An' whistled in the light—
Jest whistled
An' whistled,
Like that 'ud make things bright.

HE WHISTLED

In sowin' time or reapin',
In wrong as well as right,
When shadders come a-creepin',
He whistled fer the light—
Jest whistled
An' whistled,
Like that 'ud make things bright.

Somehow he'd hear bells ringin'
Fer all the night an' day,
An' still the birds kep' singin'
When blue skies turned to gray.
He whistled,
Jest whistled,
The rocky world away.

WINTER

WINTER, with its snow an' sleet,
Makes the hearthside warm an' sweet,
(Fact is, winter's hard to beat—
Thank the Lord fer winter!)

Wagon's rumblin' on the road,
Horses neighin' with the load,
(Finest time I ever knowed!—
Thank the Lord fer winter!)

Sweethearts at the dance you'll meet,
An' the old-time tale repeat,
(Never saw her look so sweet—
Thank the Lord fer winter!)

Brethren, country beats the town
When the winter nights come roun',
(Hi! there—take the fiddle down!
Thank the Lord fer winter!)

MOLLY AN' ME AN' THE SNOW

NEVER'LL fergit it as long as I live—
Don't keer what blessin's I know;
The hills standin' white—
Skeery ghosts o' the night—
An' Molly an' me an' the snow!

Never liked wintersome weather till then—
Win' cuttin' keen high an' low;
Cuttin' an' cryin'—
But hosses a-flyin'—
An' Molly an' me an' the snow!

Took the ol' carriage right off of her wheels—
Fixed her with runners, you know;
Then lifted Moll in it—
Wuz off in a minute;
An' 'twuz Molly an' me an' the snow!

Had to set close to her; had to slip roun'
  My arm—fer pertection—jest so!
(Fu'st time I had tried it,
With Molly inside it!)
  O 'twuz Molly an' me an' the snow!

An' course, with the roads all snowed over, you
    see,
  We didn't know jest whar' to go;
So we called on the 'Squire,
To warm at his fire—
  Molly an' me an' the snow!

An' he axed ef she'd have me; an' Molly—oh,
    well,
  Spoke so amazin'ly low!
But the question wuz carried;
In short we wuz married—
  Molly an' me an'—the snow!

HIS SWEETHEART

THE Jones boy gives her roses, an' takes her
out to walk,
An' then she tells me, when he's gone, jest all
the Jones boy's talk!
How he says his pop's got money in a great big
bank of his;—
But I don't keer who she goes with—she's my
sweetheart, she is!

The Brown boy—he comes hangin' roun', an'
takes her to a play,
An' tells her, Does she love him? ever' minute
of the way!
But she wears the flowers I give her, an' never
thinks of his:—
I don't care who she goes with—she's my sweet-
heart, she is!

Then the other boys, they wants to call, an' sit
up with her some;
But she says, "she's got engagements," an' sen's
word to me to come!
An' I whistle at the Jones boy, an' that great big
bank of his,—
I don't keer fer no money—fer she's my sweet-
heart, she is!

She's my sweetheart! No matter if the Jones boy
owns the earth;
She knows that I'm a-lovin' her a million dollars
worth!
She don't keer fer no roses—no house, or bank
of his;
She's my sweetheart till death do part—she's my
sweetheart, she is!

THE OLD HYMNS

THAR'S lots o' music in 'em—the hymns o' long ago,
An' when some gray-haired brother sings the ones I use to know
I sorter want to take a han'!—I think o' days gone by:—
"On Jordan's stormy banks I stan' and cast a wishful eye!"

Thar's lots o' music in 'em—those dear, sweet hymns o' ol',—
With visions bright o' lan's o' light, an' shinin' streets o' gol';
An' I hear 'em ringin'—singin', whar' Mem'ry, dreamin', stan's,
"From Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral stran's."

They seem to sing ferever of holier, sweeter days,
When the lilies o' the love o' God bloomed white in all the ways;

An' I want to hear their music from the ol'-time meetin's rise
Till "I can read my title cl'ar to mansions in the skies."

We never needed singin' books in them ol' days —we knew
The words—the tunes of every one the dear ol' hymn-book through!
We didn't have no trumpets then—no organs built fer show:
We only sang to praise the Lord "from whom all blessin's flow."

An' so, I love the ol' hymns, an' when my time shall come—
Before the light has left me, and my singin' lips air dumb,
Ef I kin only hear 'em then, I'll pass without a sigh
"To Canaan's fair an' happy lan', whar' my possessions lie!"

BEST O' FELLERS

BEST o' fellers fur an' wide,
Never knowed it till he died.
Said all roun' the neighborhood
He was nachully "no good,"
Till one day he closed his eyes
To the worl' an' to the skies.
Last words that we heard him say:
"I wuz allus in the way:
Jest ain't wuth a tear or sigh:
Tell 'em all good-by—good-by!"

Best o' fellers, fur an' wide,
Never knowed it till he died.
Till poor souls aroun' him pressed
An' laid roses on his breast;
Till we heard beside him moan
Folks he'd helped all unbeknown;

Little childern roun' the place
Cryin'—kissin' his white face!
Best o' fellers, fur an' wide.
Never knowed it till he died.

Best o' fellers! . . . That's the way
We're a-doin' day by day,—
Findin' thorns in gardens sweet
When the flowers air at our feet!
Allus stumblin' in the night
When the mornin's jest in sight!
Holdin' of our love until
Hearts it might have helped air still.
Best o' fellers, fur an' wide.
Never knowed it till he died.

THE PICTURE BIBLE

DON'T want no pictur' Bible; I've kinder got a doubt
That them thar' pictur's sorter crowds the ol' time gospel out.
It don't encourage my beliefs ter fix it up like that,
With yaller arks a-restin' on the top o' Ararat.

An' Moses in a gown o' red—a reg'lar fancy "robe";
An' ever'thing a-lookin' blue in twenty mile o' Job!
An' Petre on a sea o' green 'longside a speckled boat,
An' nuthin' left o' Joseph but the colors in his coat!

They can't improve that Bible—I don't keer how they try,
An' I doubt ef these new fixin's air approved of in the sky!

An' though they're mighty purty, an' sorter make
a show,
Ef the Lord had wanted pictur's He'd made 'em
long ago!

So, in spite o' all the talkin', I've sorter got a doubt
That pictur's crowds the sweetness o' the ol' time
gospel out;
They don't encourage *my* beliefs—wharever they
may be—
The plain ol' fam'ly Bible is good enough fer me!

JEST TO BE HAPPY

"JEST to be happy!" You'd hear him say—
Allus a-talkin' it thataway:
"Jest to be happy one day—one day!"
An' the poor, sad feller, he never knowed
When happiness met him on the road
An' tried to help him, an' lift the load!
Allus a-talkin' it thataway:
"Jest to be happy one day—one day!"

"Jest to be happy!" 'Twas still his song;
An' happiness—knowin' the tune wuz wrong,
Loafin' eroun' him all day long!
"Jest to be happy!" he'd still repeat,
With happiness makin' the whole worl' sweet
There, in the violets at his feet!
Allus a-talkin' it thataway:
"Jest to be happy one day—one day!"

IN THE UNION

(The Southern Veteran Speaks.)

I'VE faced the fight with Jackson, I've marched
along with Lee;
I had some words with Sherman as he galloped to
the sea;
Exchanged brisk compliments with Grant when
vict'ry seemed in view,
My old steel bayonet glittering at many a breast
in blue.

I say, I've been with Jackson, and Lee—he knew
my name;
And sometimes, when the fight was on, he called
me by the same.
I followed fierce and fearless where Longstreet led
the way
To fields whose bloody daisies were blent with blue
and gray.

But now I'm in the Union! I see there—overhead,
The flag our fathers fought for; her rippling rills of red
All glorious and victorious—the splendor of her stars—
And I say: "The blood of heroes dyed all her crimson bars."

I'm for that flag forever 'gainst foes on sea and shore.
Who shames her? Who defames her? Give me my gun once more!
We'll answer when they need us—when the war-fires light the night;
There's a Lee still left to lead us to the glory of the fight!

See how the old flag ripples, and flaunts her folds in scorn,
Her stars and bars will be the joy of nations yet unborn;

And though she waves o'er new-made graves,
'neath alien sod and dew,
There, in the starry silences, the gray sleep with
the blue.

We're one in heart forever—we're one in heart
and hand;
The flag's a challenge to the sea, a garland to the
land.
We're united—one great country: Freedom's the
watchword still;
There's a Lee that's left to lead us—let the storm
break where it will!

SONGS OF GOOD CHEER

THE GREEN WORLD

THE green world—the green world!—there's never any snow!
The roses never wither—the summers never go!
The birds are ever singing—the skies are ever blue,
And the winds that bend the branches blow blossoms over you!

The green world—the green world!—its loveliness and light—
The sun that makes its morning—the stars that gild its night!
There is no gloom—no darkness—no sorrows and no sighs,
For the light of love is shining in the rain around the eyes.

The green world—the green world!—how dear
its every clod!—
Its lilies are like altars where the wild winds wor-
ship God!
Its roses hide the thorn-spears—its storms with
rainbows fall;
There is light and love unending and love is over
all!

'LONG ABOUT THE CHRISTMAS TIME

DOES me good, when work is done,
An' I face the settin' sun,
Makin' of my homeward way
In the winter twilight gray,
Jest to think that where the light
Of my fireplace cheers the night,
Little children watch an' wait
Fer the latch-clink o' the gate—
'Specially when sweet bells chime,
'Long about the Christmas time!

They're so good 'fore Christmas comes
(Thinkin' o' them horns an' drums)
Feared the angels—ef they see—
Coax 'em all away from me!
Almost gits me feelin' sad:—
Ruther have 'em spiced with bad;—

'LONG ABOUT THE CHRISTMAS TIME

Tumblin', rumblin' down the stairs,
Goin' to bed without their prayers!
But they're cunnin',—heard the chime
Of the bells o' Christmas time!

Good Lord bless 'em! They're to me
Branches on life's Christmas tree;
Wouldn't be the world it is,
Ef one branch I come to miss!
They're the sunbeams on life's snow—
They're the heart-lights here below!
What would this world ever be
Ef their arms wuz loosed from me?
'Specially when sweet bells chime
'Long about the Christmas time?

A HOPEFUL BROTHER

EF you ask him, day or night,
When the worl' warn't runnin' right,
"Anything that's good in sight?"
This is allus what he'd say,
In his uncomplainin' way—
"Well, I'm hopin'."

When the winter days wuz nigh,
An' the clouds froze in the sky,
Never sot him down to sigh.
But, still singin' on his way,
He'd stop long enough to say—
"Well, I'm hopin'."

Dyin', asked of him that night
(Sperrit waitin' fer its flight),
"Brother, air yer prospec's bright?"
An'—last words they heard him say,
In the ol', sweet, cheerful way—
"Well, I'm hopin'."

WHAT THE FIRE SAID

I

THIS is what the Fire said
To the little boys in the trundle bed,
While the blaze was burning red and blue
And the wind sang over the chimney flue:

"Bad little boys,
They get no toys—
They will never taste o' the Christmas joys:
They will never know
Where the reindeer go
With Santa Claus, o'er the Christmas snow;
O'er the housetops high
He will pass them by:
Over empty stockings they'll weep and sigh,-
He will pass them by,
He will pass them by!"

II

And the little boys in the trundle bed
Turned to the Fire, and weeping, said:

"When your red flames glow
They chatter so.
If it wasn't for you he would never know!
If it wasn't for you
We'd have toys, too—
Talking, talking the long night through,
While the shadows flicker and dance about:
O for a rain to put you out!"

III

But the Fire said: "The skies are bright;
There will be no rain from the clouds to-night;
My flame is fierce; I am strong to fight;
And when he comes
With his horns and drums,
And a sleigh half-full of sugarplums,

I'll blister his feet
With my burning heat,
And drive him back to the snow and sleet!
I will make him fly
O'er the housetops high,—
Over empty stockings you'll weep and sigh;
He will pass you by,
He will pass you by!"

IV

That is what the Fire said
To the little boys in the trundle bed;
And then they covered each curly head
And cried themselves to sleep.
But when all save the noisy Fire was still
(Ever singing its angry will!)
And on the housetop and on the hill
The snow lay white and deep,
There came the sound of a tinkling sleigh,
And a fairy trumpet blew far away;
And Santa Claus, in his coat of gray,

Came on with a merry shout!
And over the chimney shaking the snow
To the place where he knew the flames must
glow,
The flakes fell fast on the hearth below
And put the Fire out!
Then, down the darkened chimney he sped,
And standing close by the trundle bed,
And seeing the sorrowful little boys,
He filled their stockings and hats with toys!

IT'S MORNING

NEVER star was in the sky—
Winter winds went wailing by;
Not a violet was in bloom—
Not a rainbow rimmed the gloom;
But the light's on cot and clod—
Earth is singing, and, thank God,
It's Morning!

Morning on the holy hills—
Meadows that enfold the rills;
Morning in the heavens of blue—
Morning in the eyes of you!
In the dear and dreaming eyes
Where the kind God made my skies—
It's Morning!

From a sorrow wild and deep
Weariness had led to sleep;
Sweetest sleep, because I knew
It would bring me dreams of you!
Did I dream the dark was here?
It was only dreaming, dear—
    It's Morning!

O the glory of the hills—
Violet-valleys—singing rills—
Meadows musical and sweet,
Where I hear the world's heart beat!
Past the storm, and past the strife:
Love hath led us back to life:
    It's Morning!

THE LAD WITH THE LITTLE TIN HORN

FOR all o' the world and its troubles,
He's happy, as sure as you're born;
He's up and away
At the break o' the day—
The lad with the little tin horn.
He recklessly rouses us all from our rest,
But he's still the dear fellow we're loving the best!

He roams 'neath the red o' the hollies—
Where wreaths the gay windows adorn;
He summons us all with a clarion call—
The lad with the little tin horn.
And for all of his music he's kissed and caressed,
For he's the dear fellow we're loving the best!

Ah, sad were the time o' the Christmas—
  Its bright halls forever forlorn,
Were it not for the joy
Of a dear little boy—
  A boy with a little tin horn!
In his mirth and his music the whole world is blest,
For he's the dear fellow we're loving the best!

A SONG OF TRUST

I KNOW not whether the seed shall be
Harvest of tares or wheat to me—
Harvest of tares
In bitter years:
Over the sowing I may not see.

But duty is done. With a hopeful song
I follow the furrow the field along.
If tares stay the wheat,
Yet the sowing was sweet,—
Why should I sigh for the reaping song?

Toiled not my neighbor in field and plain,
Missing the sunlight—'reft of the rain?
Sowing the seeds
Of beautiful deeds—
And reaping in sorrow the thorns of pain?

Yet the deed was dear, and the seed was fair,
Though they flowered not in an answered prayer:
And Duty done
Is victory won,
And still in that harvest his heart shall share.

Heart, there are lessons to learn: the years
Can not hide heaven, for all their tears!
What though I weep
Where my dead hopes sleep?
Still in the tempest the star appears.

And Love is living, and life is fed
With Love forever—its daily bread;
And Love's own light
Illumes the night
Over the graves that hide Love's dead!

FELLOW WHO HAD DONE HIS BEST

FELLOW who had done his best
Went one morning to his rest;
Never lip his forehead pressed—
Not one rose on his still breast.
But the angels knew that day
How along the rocky way
He had traveled for that rest—
Fellow who had done his best!

No one, as he trudged along,
Knew the sigh was in the song;
No one heard his poor heart beat
Where the sharp thorns pierced his feet.
But that day—the day he died—
There were angels at his side,
Angels singing him to rest—
Fellow who had done his best.

For the room was strangely bright,
And his face, in morning light,
Had a smile that seemed to say:
"After darkness comes the day!
All the grief—the gloom is past,
And the morning's mine at last!"
Far he'd traveled for that rest—
Fellow who had done his best.

Never sermon, song or sigh
Went that day toward the sky;
But God's lilies—violets sweet,
Decked his grave at head and feet;
And the birds, in shadows dim,
Sang their sweetest over him.
He that went that way for rest—
Fellow who had done his best.

THE PHILOSOPHER

A HOMELY PHILOSOPHER

THE craps is all gethered, I reckon;
Hain't made a good show fer the fall;
But what's the use sighin',
An' wailin', an' cryin'?
Thank God, thar's enough fer us all!

We've lost some on cotton, I reckon,
An' 'taters air powerful small!
But what's the use sighin'?
The fritters air fryin',
An' thar's jest 'bout enough fer us all!

We'll pull through the winter, I reckon;
We never have gone to the wall!
So, put on the griddle,
An' tune up the fiddle—
Thar's room in the quadrille fer all!

WINTER'S COMIN'!

WINTER'S comin' in fer shore—
Blusterin' eroun';
Mollie, san' the cabin floor—
Take the fiddle down.
Short on cotton,—who's to blame?
We'll be dancin' jest the same!

Boys air comin' down the road
Jest to dance with you.
Apples? What a rosy load!
Jugs o' cider, too!
Corn crap failed us,—who's to blame?
We'll be dancin' jest the same!

Never cry fer what we've missed—
Let the fire burn steady.
All the gals air to be kissed,
An' the boys air ready!
All craps poorly,—who's to blame?
We kin dance, dear, jest the same!

KEEP A-GOIN'!

EF you strike a thorn or rose,
Keep a-goin'!
Ef it hails, or ef it snows,
Keep a-goin'!
'Tain't no use to sit an' whine,
When the fish ain't on yer line;
Bait yer hook an' keep a-tryin'—
Keep a-goin'!

When the weather kills yer crop,
Keep a-goin'!
When you tumble from the top,
Keep a-goin'!
S'pose you're out o' every dime,
Bein' so ain't any *crime;*
Tell the world you're feelin' *prime*—
Keep a-goin'!

KEEP A-GOIN'!

When it looks like all is up,
Keep a-goin'!
Drain the sweetness from the cup,
Keep a-goin'!
See the wild birds on the wing,
Hear the bells that sweetly ring,
When you feel like sighin' *sing*—
Keep a-goin'!

WHEN A FELLER HAS THE BLUES

WHEN a feller has the blues,
'Taint no use to ask his views
'Bout the country—how it goes:—
Ef it hails, or ef it snows—
Cotton up or cotton down—
Worl' stopped still, or whirlin' roun',—
Never keers fer any news—
That poor feller with the blues!

Sun may do his best to shine—
Blossoms purple on the vine;
Win's may sing in music sweet,
Rivers ripple at his feet;
An' the birds the boughs erlong
Jest may split their throats with song,—
But he's lonesome as you choose—
That 'ere feller with the blues!

Whar'd they come from? Day by day,
You kin see 'em on the way,
Jest a-trudgin' up the slope—
Drownin' all the bells o' Hope!
Comin' in the door to chide you—
Drawin' up a chair beside you,
Sayin', "Hello! What's the news?"
Them exasperatin' blues!

Then it is we know we're human—
Then it is the smile o' woman—
Is the only welcome light
That comes twinklin' through the night!
Ef that smile o' hers has boun' you—
Ef you feel her arms eroun' you,
Be as happy as you choose,
With "Good mornin'" to the blues!

THE USUAL WAY

IT'S all right, I reckon, an' ef they must go
Thar's no use persuadin' an' takin' on so;
Fer "Boys will be boys," is the sayin' an' they
Ain't diff'runt from others that's shoutin' "Hooray!"
It's the usual way—
It's the usual way!

I see the old man limpin' roun' on a peg,
An' I p'ints 'em the moral that's thar'—in one leg;
He left one in battle. But what kin I say,
When the regiment fellers air shoutin "Hooray"?
It's the usual way—
It's the usual way!

It's all right, I reckon; fer fightin' has joys
Fer devil-keer sperrits—an' "Boys will be boys!"
So I kiss 'em goodby; fer they never will stay
When the regiment fellers air shoutin' "Hooray!"
It's the usual way—
It's the usual way!

SETTIN' BY THE FIRE

NEVER much on stirrin' roun'
(Sich warn't his desire),
Allers certain to be foun'
Settin' by the fire.

When the frost wuz comin' down—
Col' win' creepin' nigher,
Spent each day jest thataway—
Settin' by the fire.

When the dancin' shook the groun'—
Raised the ol' roof higher,
Never swung the gals eroun'—
Sot thar' by the fire.

SETTIN' BY THE FIRE

Same ol' corner night an' day—
  Never 'peared to tire;
Not a blessed word to say!
  Jest sot by the fire.

When he died, by slow degrees,
  Folks said: "He's gone higher;"
But it's my opinion he's
  Settin' by the fire.

THE HAZY, DAISY WEATHER

THE way this hazy, mazy, daisy kind o' weather goes
The wind is all too lazy fer to rumple up a rose;
It's sighin' jest so soft-like its voice is lost away,—
Lost some'rs in the blossoms whar' the honeysuckles stay.

Dream time,
Dream time—
Time to take yer ease,
In the green, sweet clover—
A brother to the breeze!

Noises o' the city life faint as faint kin be;
Shadders o' the maples an' the mossed-oaks over me.
Rills that sing in sunshine an' ripple through the dells
To the drowsy tinkle, tinkle o' the sleepy cattle-bells.

Dream time,
Dream time—
Time to take yer ease,
In the green, sweet clover—
A brother to the breeze!

Don't want any lover. They air sweet to see;
But thar's more in life, I'm thinkin', than red lips
bring to me.
I'm whar' the lilies know me, an' the rivers sing
an' shine;—
I'm married to the meadow, an' the parson is the
pine!

Dream time,
Dream time—
Time to take yer ease,
In the green, sweet clover—
A brother to the breeze!

A HALLELUIA FELLOW

I AIN'T so much on talkin' when they're axin' folks to rise
An' sorter read their titles clear to mansions in the skies;
I mostly sets thar' quiet, till the Sperrit moves me —*then*
I hollers "Halleluia!" an' the brotherin' says "Amen!"

I don't object to talkin'—to stan' an' testify
To Canaan's fair an' happy lan' whar' my possessions lie;
But I never wuz a *orator;* you've got to *rouse* me; then
I jest shouts "Halleluia!" an' the brotherin' says "Amen!"

Ain't much on long experiences, wharever they
may be,
Though fond o' that amazin' grace that saved a
wretch like me.
I jest sets still an' listens till the fire *burns* me;—
then
I gives 'em "Halleluia!" an' the brotherin' says
"Amen!"

Though, of course, it makes some fellers in the
big revivals smile,
I says more in a minute than they gits to in a mile.
An' when I gits to glory, an' the gates air swing-
in',—then
I'll holler "Halleluia!" till the angels say "Amen!"

NONE FOR HIM

DON'T want no bullets swishin',
Fer peace is hard to beat;
The river's ripe fer fishin'
An' the birds air singin' sweet;
An' a feller falls to dreamin',
With the daisies at his feet.

Don't want no captains callin'
To charge, or to retreat;
The springtime blooms air fallin'
On the medder an' the street;
An' the bees air sippin' honey
From the hearts o' roses sweet.

Don't want no bayonets shinin'
Whar' the blossoms orter be;
Whar' woodlan' vines air twinin'
An' rills sing sweet to sea;
Fer springtime's here a-smilin'
An' loafin' roun' with me!

'SIDE A CABIN FIRE

WHAT care we fer wind an' storm
Comin' nigh an' nigher
Helter-skelter!
Here's a shelter,
An' a cabin fire!

Snow an' sleet in windy beat—
Soon the storm'll tire;
Don't alarm us:
What kin harm us
'Side a cabin fire?

Here's our world—a little space
Mighty few'd admire;
But we're merry!
Cares we bury
'Side a cabin fire.

Let the weather work its will—
  Storm winds blowin' higher;
Sings the fiddle—
Smokes the griddle
  'Side a cabin fire.

A POOR UNFORTUNATE

I

HIS hoss went dead an' his mule went lame;
He lost six cows in a poker game;
A harricane come on a summer's day,
An' carried the house whar' he lived away;
Then a airthquake come when that wuz gone,
An' swallered the lan' that the house stood on!
An' the tax collector, *he* come roun'
An' charged him up fer the hole in the groun'!
An' the city marshal—he come in view
An' said he wanted his street tax, too!

II

Did he moan an' sigh? Did he set an' cry
An' cuss the harricane sweepin' by?
Did he grieve that his ol' friends failed to call
When the airthquake come an' swallered all?

Never a word o' blame he said,
With all them troubles on top his head!
Not *him!* . . . He clumb to the top o' the hill—
Whar' standin' room wuz left him still,
An', barin' his head, here's what he said:
"I reckon it's time to git up an' git;
But, Lord, I hain't had the measels yit!"

AN IDLE FELLOW

SOME folks, they says I'm lazy
An' fon' o' loafin' 'roun',
Think too much of a daisy
To plow it out the groun';
Would ruther loll an' listen
Whar' the dews air drippin' down
An' the rivers sing an' glisten,
Than drive the mules to town.

The folks air right, I reckon;
Can't nuthin' make me stay
When I see the green trees beckon
From the medders fur away.
When the cattle bells air ringin'
Whar' the grass waves wild and free,
An' the mockin' birds air singin'
Like they're singin' *right at me!*

The good Lord said the lilies
  Didn't toil an' didn't spin,
An' I kinder think His will is
  I should take the lilies in!
An' I think the world must need 'em
  In the sunshine an' the storm,
For He sends His dews to feed 'em
  An' His light to keep 'em warm.

I wuz born to be a rover,
  Fer I love the woods the best,
An' the dewy bed o' clover
  Is the sweetes' fer my rest;
An' I'd ruther see above me
  A blue sky bendin' down
Whar' the lilies lean an' love me,
  Than drive the mules to town!

LOVE SONGS

THE SWEET COMMAND

"LOVE thou thy neighbor as thyself:"
I've read it o'er and o'er.
By Love's dear hand,
A sweet command!—
I love my neighbor more!
I love her as the light that shines,
Kissing her red lips through the vines!

"Love thou thy neighbor as thyself:"
I like that scripture sweet!
I do fulfill
That scripture's will
With my heart's every beat!
I love her as the glad winds race
To roses smiling in her face!

"Love thou thy neighbor as thyself:"
Preach from the text no more!
The broad sea rolls
Between our souls,
And shore is far from shore.
Yet still in grace my soul shall grow,—
I love—I love my neighbor so!

MARCELLE'S LOVERS

FIFTY lovers—ay, and more,
Marcelle,
Marcelle!
Count them, mistress, by the score—
Marcelle,
Marcelle!
Fifty lovers! Well, I wis
Never maid knew love like this,
Standing tip-toe for a kiss—
Marcelle,
Marcelle!

From the flowering east and west,
Marcelle,
Marcelle!
Roses wreathe they for your rest,
Marcelle,
Marcelle!

From the gardens April-blest
Blooms they bring to your dear breast;
Kiss the lover you love best—
Marcelle,
Marcelle!

Sure, their faiths must faint and fall,
Marcelle,
Marcelle!
You have kisses for them all,
Marcelle,
Marcelle!
But two years have twinkled bright
Since your brown eyes saw the light;
And your kiss is mine to-night—
Marcelle,
Marcelle!

IN THE RED DEEPS OF MAY

I

THE weary world is lonesome—so lonesome, dear, alway,
An' I would I were with Philip in the red deeps of May!
For Summer's sweetest roses seem phantoms cold and gray,
An' I would I were with Philip in the red deeps of May!

In the red deeps of May,
Where he'd sing my soul away;
With Philip—oh, with Philip,
In the red deeps of May!

II

The red rose and the white rose are woven in my way,
But I would I were with Philip in the red deeps of May!

'Neath stars that tinged the midnight—'neath
suns that blessed the day—
With Philip—oh, with Philip, in the red deeps of
May!

In the red deeps of May
Where he'd sing my soul away;
With Philip—mine forever,
In the red deeps of May!

III

O maiden, with the lover, and lover with the ring,
Sing all the sweetest melodies that lips of you can
sing!
But nothing e'er so sweet can be as sweet songs
lost away
From the lips—the lips of Philip, in the red deeps
of May!

In the red deeps of May—
Where my heart must beat away—
With Philip—oh, with Philip,
In the red deeps of May!

A NECKLACE OF LOVE

NO rubies of red for my lady—
No jewel that glitters and charms,
But the light of the skies in a little one's eyes,
And a necklace of two little arms.

Of two little arms that are clinging
(Oh, ne'er was a necklace like this!)
And the wealth o' the world and love's sweetness impearled
In the joy of a little one's kiss.

A necklace of love for my lady
That was linked by the angels above.
No other but this—and the tender, sweet kiss
That sealeth a little one's love.

THE RING AND THE ROSE

A RING and a rose, Jean—a velvety tress,—
And I love you no more, and I love you no less:
But still, in the light of a cynical day,
I can hold your white hand while I'm going your way.
Are these all that life has to brighten and bless—
A ring, and a rose, and a velvety tress?

A ring and a rose! 'Twere a wonderful thing
If we shackled Love's liberty, dear, with a ring!
If he went the unvarying pathway he knows
For the sake of a soft tress—the kiss of a rose!
I love you no more, dear, I love you no less,
For a ring, and a rose, and a velvety tress.

See, how the stars beckon! That way, dear, lies fame—
The glory we sigh for—a wreath and a name!

And how may I win them if 'neath the bright skies
I revel and rest in the light of your eyes?
Oh, yet for some word from the life-stars above!
And shall it be fame, Jean—or shall it be love?

I fear for the answer! Nay, let your eyes dawn:—
Would the light in them fade if my lips were withdrawn?
If I gained the far summit in splendor of light,
Would a woman's heart miss me and dwell with the Night?
Would I still to my bosom in memory press
A ring, and a rose, and a velvety tress?

Hold fast to my hand, Jean! It's love that is true;
Hold fast to my hand:—*I am going with you!*
I am going to trample all else in the dust
Save your love—I believe it!—your beautiful trust!
With never a sigh, or the mist of a tear,
I am giving the world and its wealth for you, dear!

Hold fast to my hand, Jean! Though humble the way,
It shall lead us at last to a lovelier day;
We shall face the far skies with their blackness and blue,
And if heights may be won, I shall win them with you!
There are tears of the years on the wreath 'round a name:
It is love, dear, that lives o'er the ashes of Fame!

MARCELLE

I LOVE her well—
Marcelle, Marcelle!
For hints of heaven seem to dwell
Within her eyes—her violet eyes;
And in her hair soft, sunset dyes,
As from far fields of Paradise.
I may not sing, I may not say,
By starry night, or sun-swept day;
How well—how well
I love Marcelle!

I love her well—
Marcelle, Marcelle!
Her voice is like a silver bell
That summons souls to worship; she
Is on Love's throne and Love leads me
Where smiles his priestess radiantly;
I may not say, I may not sing
How wintry days are kissed to spring—
Nor ever tell
How passing well
I love Marcelle—I love Marcelle!

A SONG IN SPRINGTIME

I HEAR the world's heart beat
In the grasses at my feet. . .
Are you somewhere in the woodlands, that the thrush is singing, Sweet?

O speak—rejoicing plain!
And gardens, green for rain:
Is she somewhere in the meadows, where the bees the honey drain?

I hear the world's heart beat:
For the wintry storms retreat. . .
Are you somewhere in the blossoms, that the light has found them, Sweet?

O speak—exulting hills!
Where a great Heart throbs and thrills:
Is she somewhere in the music of the ripple of the rills?

O God, Thy world is sweeter!
It has mastered heaven's own meter. . .
Is she where the unseen angels rest unwearied
wings to greet her?

Sure—sure her step is near me,
For the robins do not fear me,
And viewless chariots of the air to blissful Aidens bear me.

Dear world—so new, so sweet!
Grown glad her grace to greet. . .
O darken not your sunflowers till they light me
to her feet!

LETITIA'S LIKENESS

THE likeness of Letitia:
She lived so long ago
O'er the dead lilies of her dust
Undreaming daisies grow.
No marble to her memory;
Only this writing saith—
The faded legend of her love:—
"Thine to the gates of Death!"

Whose? Knights that rode in tourney
O'er meadows of romance,
Who bowed them at her footstool
Or battled for a glance?
Or yet, some humbler lover,
Unskilled in war and art,
Who heard in summer silences
The beating of her heart?

The world cares not; unheeding
  Pass unremembering years;
Her love—her trust, are things of dust,—
  Her triumphs and her tears.
Yet, all to-day that Love can say
  That faded legend saith:
What more? To be her lover's
  "Unto the gates of Death!"

WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT

WHEN the lights go out—when the lights go out,
And the trembling hand is groping in the darkness round about
For the gentle clasp it misses—
For the lips with last, sweet kisses,
May I find you then, my dearie, when the lights go out!

When the lights go out—when the lights go out—
When the bright stars fade from heaven and the darkness is a doubt,
May your heart—the first to love me—
In that moment beat above me—
May I find you then, my dearie, when the lights go out!

When the lights go out—when the lights go out,
Will your dear lips whisper faith, dear—will they
kiss away the doubt?
Oh, my soul—though unforgiven,
Shall with dying eyes see heaven
If my darling is but near me when the lights go
out!

THE WIND O' THE NIGHT

I

THE wind's at the casement. O wind o' the night!
Do you envy this shelter—this flickering light?
You have stormed the pale stars from the heaven above:—
Would you hound this lone hearth, with its ashes of love?
Far—far be your flight,
O wind o' the night,
To the terrified seas, with their billows of white;—
To the fearful seas, where the black skies frown,
And the gray gulls scream as the ships go down!
Fast in flight—
O wind o' the night,
From the ashes of love and the phantom of light!

II

The wind's at the casement. O wind o' the night,
Beat down the rude portals in wrath and in might!
You have blown the bleak stars from the heaven above:—
Wreak your rage on this hearth, with its ashes of love!
Nay, wing not your flight,
O wind o' the night,
To the seas where the drowned souls are shrouded in white;
For the seas they lie east, and the seas they lie west;
But the stormiest sea's in the human breast!
Stay your flight,
O wind o' the night:—
Here are ashes of love for you—embers of light!

III

The wind's at the casement. O wind o' the night,
Toss o'er my bleak bosom lost tresses of light!

Reveal through the clouds—through the shrouds
o' the skies,
The smile on her dear lips—the light of her eyes!
I am weary to-night
As your wings in their flight,
For the fall of her beautiful tresses of light!
For the seas they lie east, and the seas they lie
west,
But they bring her no more to the love of my
breast!
Stay your flight,
O wind o' the night:—
Here are ashes of love for you—embers of light!

A BALLAD OF LETITIA

I

LETITIA had lovers a score—ay, and more!
And this one brought riches and splendor;
And that one brought fame
And the light of a name
To plead for her heart's love so tender.
But it's ho! for the dreamer with nothing to bring—
With never a necklace or round of a ring,
Who dwelt in the vales where the mocking-birds sing,
With nothing but true love to render!

II

O fair were the lovers, and many and sweet
Were the love words they brought to the wooing;
And gold hath a glitter,
And poverty's bitter—
A phantom forever pursuing.

But ho! for the dreamer with nothing to bring
Save a rose from the reddened sweet lips o' the
spring—
A rose—O my masters!—a rose for a ring!—
A rose for a rival's undoing!

III

"And whither, Letitia—ah, whither away
From the skies that bend brightly above you?
And hark you, bright eyes,
To the words o' the wise:
Let the gifts of your glad lovers move you!"
But ho! for the dreamer with nothing to bring—
In the blossomy vales where the mocking-birds sing!
And the rose to her lips, and "Goodby to the ring!"
And "I love you! I love you! I love you!"

BEFORE THE GATES

I

AT heaven's high gate each mortal told his story,
And one came crowned with gold, and one
with glory.

II

One said: "I built great temples that arise
With spires that point the pathway to the skies."

III

And one: "I scattered gold before my door
When rose the rage of all the rabble poor."

IV

And yet another: "On the heights of Fame,
Toiling obscure, I carved a deathless name."

V

And then came one in meek and lowly guise:
Nor to the angel did he lift his eyes.

VI

"What hast thou done to gain the courts above?"
"Nothing," he said. "All that I knew was love;

VII

"That love which was—that love which is to be;
And love I gave, and love returned to me!"

VIII

Then said the angel: "Lift thou up thine eyes:
Enter the shining gates of Paradise!"

IF LOVE BE THINE

BE thou content
If Love be thine. Let not thy robe be rent,
Nor sigh in sackcloth that he kneels not here,
Or wreathes for thee no living laurel there.

Be thou content
If that one star shine in Love's firmament.
Only to know one glance of Love is thine
Is to make life immortal and divine!

LET THE DREAM PASS

LIFE hath its burdens—
  Bitter, alas!
Still we can bear them:
  Let the dream pass!
Vanishing ever—
  The sands in the glass;
Time will not linger:
  Let the dream pass!

Why, in the shadow—
  Why, in the gleam,
Should we sit sighing
  Over a dream?
Phantoms pursuing
  Vainly, alas!
Deeds for the doing!—
  Let the dream pass!

Ever and ever
  Some flaw in the strain;
Never—oh, never
  The old dreams again!
Life-lights are dying—
  Night comes—alas!
Heart, cease thy sighing—
  Let the dream pass!

OVER THE GREEN HILLS

TO E. W. M.

I

OVER the green hills that climb to the blue
This message to you:
Life, dear, is mingled with daisies and dust,
Bitter its burdens, though bear them we must;
But sweet is its love, dear, and tender its trust—
Over the green hills this message to you!

II

Over the pathways of rose and of rue
This message to you:
Life, dear, is shadow, though silvered by sun;
Sweet is the joy, dear, of duty well done;
What of the strife, if the victory's won?
Over the green hills this message to you!

THE PORTRAIT

HERE'S Laura—wrinkled now, and old:
No dye the gray hair covers;
There is no hint of curls of gold
Adored by countless lovers.
Where are those lips that shamed the rose?
The dimpled cheek—the smile?—God knows!

An old man with thin locks of white
(What, now, can he admire?)
Broods o'er her pictured face to-night
Beside a dying fire.
Where are the eyes of amethyst,
And where the white, sweet hands he kissed?

'Fore God, the world has slipped away—
Dim skies are now above him:
'Twere mockery if these lips should say
They love him—still they love him!
Yet, these were lips that shamed the rose:
How came they drawn and white? God knows!

And this was once a woman fair
  As dewy sunrise gleaming;
Love kissed her lips, her hands, her hair,
  And in her smile went dreaming.
How could the years such havoc make?
Once men died for this woman's sake!

Her lovers now are wan and old!
  No joy their pathway blesses;
What hand that wrinkled hand shall hold,
  Or smooth the dim, gray tresses?
'Fore God, the world has slipped away,
And even Love is old and gray.

And Mistress Margaret—matron sweet—
  Far fairer ties have bound her;
She hears her children's pattering feet—
  Child-arms are necklaced round her.
In her sweet, tranquil face appears
Love, smiling on you through glad years.

But Laura! . . . Like a bauble thing—
  A weak and withering blossom,
Tossed love in life's delicious spring
  From her unfeeling bosom.
Men died for her—chained, trampled slaves—
And now what has she but their graves?

And Laura is a ghost that seems
  To glide from years long perished;
The gods be gentle with her dreams—
  With the dead hopes she cherished!
An old man with thin locks of white,
Breathes this last prayer for her to-night!

IN HARVEST DAYS

THE wheat bends down
With its golden crown,
And it's ho! for the lass that loves me!
It's a brief, bright way
To the parson's town,
Then ho! for the lass that loves me!

For her eyes are bright
As the twinklin' light
Of the stars o'er the wheat fields shinin',
An' never I roam
But they light me home
Where the lass for me is pinin'.

Let the golden crown
Of the wheat bend down—
It's all for the lass that loves me!
The parson's town
An' the weddin' gown,
An' the lips of the lass that loves me!

MY SHAKESPEARE

I LAY my gentle Shakespeare down
Even where there runs a rumor
That Portia fareth unto town
To plead with grace and humor.
For when her fair, sweet face I see
A dearer Portia pleads for me!

Another Imogen, O sweet!
Another scene stands brave in,
And fareth faithfully to meet
Her lord at Milford Haven.
I read her beauteous soul, and then
I think of thee—my Imogen!

And Isabella, clothed with grace,
From weeping couch hath risen
And with the lovelight in her face
Pleads for the soul in prison.
I hail her sweet, and pure and wise,
But find a fairer in thine eyes!

And then Cordelia in the night
  And tempest rude hath found me.
Are these her lips—her eyes of light,
  And these her arms around me?
Before me, with sweet, saving hands,
Dear heart! a new Cordelia stands.

I lay my gentle Shakespeare down
  Who never pleadeth vainly,
How could he write in London Town
  And picture thee so plainly?
O Night, fly to the Morning sweet,
And Morning find me at thy feet!

THE SWEETHEART OF A SOLDIER

THE sweetheart of a soldier—she kissed his lips
that day
When the silver bugles summoned to the red wrath
of the fray;
And "Go," she cried, "to glory—where falls the
crimson rain,
And Love will wait with tears and prayers till Love
comes home again!"

The sweetheart of a soldier—and forth the soldier
went,
Where the flowering fields were reddened and the
rippling banners rent;
And "Come," she cried, "from glory, where Love
all yearning dwells,
For all the battle-flags are furled and Peace rings
in the bells!"

But white and still beneath the stars on the red
field he lies,
Where Death, that heeds not glory, kissed down
his dreaming eyes.
And the sweetheart of the soldier must wait and
watch in vain—
Must wait with tears and prayers for Love that
comes not home again!

SONGS OF OTHER DAYS

AN OLD-FASHIONED GENTLEMAN

"AN old-fashioned gentleman"—that's what they said—
"The last of his race"—like a ghost from the dead
He seemed to the many; among them he passed
In honor—a gentleman born, to the last!
It was seen by the way that he carried his head—
By his dignified mien and his soldierly tread;
By his scorn of all offers of wealth and fame—
By his robe—never soiled in the shadows of shame.
"An old-fashioned gentleman!"—that's what they said—
"The last of his race"—like a ghost from the dead!

"An old-fashioned gentleman!" Well for the ways
Where we walked in these thorny and wearisome days,

That such are beside us, with souls that are white
And they drift with the dreams down the valleys
of Night.
They speak from the past; they are true to the
last;
Like the oaks of the forest, they brave every blast;
The same in misfortune as in the bright gleam
Of years that were music and passed like a dream!
"An old-fashioned gentleman"—that's what they
said—
"The last of his race"—like a ghost from the dead!

THE OLD BOOKS

THEY are gray with the gray of ages,
Borrowed, and begged, and sold;
Thumb-marked of saints and sages,
In the scholarly days of old.
Rose leaves pressed for a lover
Rest in their pages dim,
Though silent centuries cover
All that is left of him.

And I feel in the library's shadows,
With this ghostly company,
The breath of forgotten meadows
And the centuries over me!
And when twilight bells are calling—
When the day with its strifes is o'er—
There are ghostly footsteps falling
Faint on the library floor.

Singers, and saints and sages—
  In the fame of a name we trust,
But time will cover our pages,
  As even our tombs, with dust.
For here, in the library's shadows,
  Where the famed and fameless be,
I roam in forgotten meadows,
  With the centuries over me!

THE FALLEN OF THE FIGHT

OH, the story and the glory of the fallen of the fight
Beneath the drooped flags dreaming in the laurels and the light.
Is there rumor of the strife now?
Do their bright swords leap to life now?
Do they hear the far-rolled thunder of the grim guns in the night?

Oh, the story and the glory of the fallen of the fight!
Does the clamor of the captains reach their ranks all ghostly white?
Nay—they rest with rusting blades,
All the glory-starred brigades,
And the peace of God is on them in the splendor of the light.

In the peace of God they sleep, while the battle thunders sweep
Over the echoing oceans where deep calleth unto deep;
Where from stormy sea to sea
Waves the starred flag of the free,
And their comrades, armed in honor, their vigil-fires keep.

Oh, the story and their glory! Let the red stripes o'er them wave,
Red as the blood that crimsoned them—the life-blood that they gave!
Blow, bugles, east and west,
Over their rose-wreathed rest,
And the love of a common country, like a garland on their grave.

THE DEAD SINGER

(H. J.)

DEAD! . . . Let no saintly hands be lifted where
Shrouded and still he lies
To bar and ban the pallid dreamer there
From Faith's illumined skies.

Better the battle, where his sword flashed bright,
Had known his dying breath,
Than this! . . . But he, aweary of the light,
Challenged the gates of Death.

Who shall upbraid him? Who shall prate of wrong?
His from his earliest youth
The sweetness and the tenderness of song—
The love of Love and Truth.

For song dwelt with him; in his life's dark night
He caught from far, bright spheres
A mystery of melody—the light
That glimmered through his tears.

And who shall say in Death's dim presence now
His life was incomplete?
Hands have been laid upon that thorn-wreathed brow
In benediction sweet.

Hands he uplifted—hearts that he sustained
Come now, not to condemn;
What bitter cup life gave to him he drained,
And left life's sweets to them.

So now, still resting in the eternal rest,
Beyond the morning's beams,
Fold the tired hands in peace above the breast
And leave him with the dreams.

THE DEAR OLD TUNES

WHEN the dear old tunes come ringing,
From the band,
From the band,
I can hear a far-off singing
From a dim and ghostly land,
Where the phantom tents are shining,
And stacked the rifles stand.

When the dear old tunes come ringing
From the band,
From the band,
There are spectral soldiers swinging
Into line on every hand.
Grim veterans form in columns,
And shout the captains grand!

When the dear old tunes come ringing
From the band,
From the band,

Torn battle-flags seem flinging
  Their glory o'er the land.
The dead rise up and answer
  To the roll-call of the band!

IN THE NIGHT

TO E. W. M.

ONLY the Night and the stormy skies—
The Night, so dark and wild,
And in the gloom of a lonely room
The breathing of a child.

A little child that the angels led
From a land we deem divine;
Who came to me when the prayer was said
And laid his lips on mine.

The smile of God on his dreaming face
In the lamplight's fitful gleams;
And I know that the angels lift the lace
And kiss him into the dreams.

I wonder why, in the silence here,
My heart, with quickened beat,
Echoes the sound of a falling tear
On his beautiful face and sweet!

IN THE NIGHT

Is it a thought of the weary way
The little feet must tread,
Or the grief of a soul that can not pray
Where its altar-fires are dead?

Never an answer for all the years . . .
O storm, and midnight strife,
Have ye only the dew of burning tears
To fall on the rose of life?

Only the Night and the stormy skies—
The Night so dark and wild,
And in the gloom of a lonely room
The breathing of a child.

AWAY WITH THE DREAMS

(On the death of an ex-confederate soldier, whose funeral was attended by Grand Army veterans.)

FAR—far from his sunny-sweet meadows,
The blue hills and sea-singing streams,
He felt the fast gathering shadows
And drifted away with the dreams.
No sound of the musketry's rattle—
War-thunders and glories and gleams;
In peace—having fought his last battle—
He drifted away with the dreams.

He had followed where Jackson was leading—
He had blazed a red pathway for Lee,
His sword in the cause he was pleading;
He had battled with Semmes on the sea.
But now, o'er his form they were bending—
Old foes, in a new morning's beams,
With tears for the life that was ending,
As he drifted away with the dreams.

They saw the red scars on his bosom
(The wounds that he gloried to wear),
And Love, like a lily-white blossom,
Was tenderly laid on them there.
"A soldier!" Enough in the knowing:
The light of the far battle streams.
No wonder the quick tears were flowing
As he drifted away with the dreams!

And they tenderly lifted and laid him
(Those wounds—Honor's stars—on his breast)
On a couch Love had blest and had made him
In the beautiful lilies of rest.
Still "at home," in a land love-united,
Though far from his meadows and streams,—
The love-lamps—the love-lamps were lighted,
And he drifted away with the dreams.

AT BAY

AY, come in, if you will—you froth of the frenzied night!
I shall wreak the rage of my soul as I trample your crest of white!
Trample you—trample you down, as the world has trampled me—
Come in, you wraiths of the clouds—you ghosts of the hills and sea!

Rattle the icy panes where the sleet-drop pelts and reels—
Wind that bites the beggar—a baying hound at his heels!
Ay, come in to this icy hearth, where the fires of life are dim,
And rock the roof and the casement with the howl of your hated hymn!

Ne'er knock at a beggar's door—O Spirit of Storm and Night!
Hurl your thunders against it and beat it down with your might!
Never a right hath a beggar—no word at court shall he win:
Down with the doors, I charge you! let the wolves come snarling in!

The beggars crouch by the casements, and the saintly souls condemn:
They cry to the Lord for shelter, and He sends His storms on them;
A curse on a beggar's crying—a curse on his homeless head!
And preach of a far Christ dying for these that their hands strike dead!

I dare the worst! I am one with the wind and snow and dashing sleet—
Enemies they; but I mock them, and fearless their fury meet.

Have they not hounded me far? and when that I
groaned in pain,
Did they ever cease for mercy? The pang and
the prayer were vain!

The world shall slay a man when he dreams that
the gods have given
The unspeakable fire to his soul: they shall slay
him in sight of heaven!
They shall grind him down as they grind the stones
—beaten, driven and led,
They shall give him rags for his shivering bones—
a crust when he cries for bread!

There was a song in my soul—of Right in a world
of Wrong;
And sweet to me was the singing, though the tears
fell with the song;
Sweet as the sound of harbor bells that sing to the
ships at sea—
As the dew is to the clover—as the bloom is to the
bee.

And I sang for the joy of singing—not for the
crown of years:
And there was peace in the pain for me, and there
was light in the tears;
For a spirit came in a dream and whispered the
hidden thing;
And the stars streamed down in splendor, and I
heard the Morning sing!

And Love came from the copses—Love in his
April-youth;
And I sang his praise in the cities, and crowned
his brow with Truth;
And ever a rainbow shone for me over the storm
and strife,
And I saw the light in the darkness, and gar-
landed Death with Life.

I gave my tears and my prayers, and the voice of
my soul; and lo!
My answer comes in the beggar's den—in the pit-
iless pelting snow—

In the roar of the icy winds that envy the feeble flame
That flickers here in the ashes where I trace the Spirit's name!

Come in, O Ghosts of the Night! Knock not, O Wind, at my door!
Batter the barrier down and shake the roof with your roar!
What right—what wrong hath a beggar? No favor at court he'll win:
Enter—all foes and hatreds! let the wolves come snarling in!

And this is the end of all . . . . of the toiling and the tears!
But I face the last undaunted; and reck not of the years;
Is the love of the world a lie, as the gold of the world is dross?
The bells are ringing the Christ in . . . . Come on—come with the Cross!

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